

# THE ARGOSY.

APRIL, 1897.

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## PEACE WITH HONOUR.

BY SYDNEY C. GRIER, AUTHOR OF "IN FURTHEST IND," ETC.

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### CHAPTER VII.

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST.

THE day following had been appointed by the King for the state reception of the Mission, and Sir Dugald and his staff departed early to the Palace, each man arrayed in the most gorgeous garments in his possession. The occasion was a purely formal one, consisting chiefly of the presentation of the different members of the Mission to the King by name, followed by a little ceremonial conversation between his Majesty and Sir Dugald. The King's questions concerned chiefly the personal and family history of Queen Victoria, although he was also interested in the past services of the Envoy himself. It was not considered correct for Sir Dugald to originate any remarks, when once the courteous messages with which he had been charged by his Government were delivered, and conversation did not flow very freely, although, thanks to the necessity for interpreting everything that was said, the time was fairly well filled up. The King was obviously ill at ease, asking every now and then sudden questions as to the object of the Mission, and the intention of the Government in sending it, with the evident aim of disconcerting Sir Dugald. But the shrewd dark eyes scanned the Envoy's face in vain for any signs of confusion or surprise, and his tranquil and unhurried manner seemed gradually to disarm the King's suspicions. For Sir Dugald to succeed in maintaining his air of careless calm was no slight triumph under the circumstances, since he noticed many things which assured him, of the correctness of the information given by Mr. Hicks. Rustam Khan was nowhere to be seen, but the little Antar Khan, a boy of about eleven, robed in bright blue satin and decked with jewels, occupied a seat at his father's side, and was allowed to interpolate remarks of his own into the conversation in a way that

showed him to be high in favour. Moreover, the King made no allusion to the eager request he had sent to England for a lady doctor who might examine his wife's eyes, and it seemed as though Georgia's journey to Kubbet-ul-Haj would be useless, since she could not visit the royal harem without an invitation. The Amirs who stood around the throne appeared interested in all that passed, but their faces expressed no conspicuously friendly feeling, while one of their number, whom the staff identified at once with the Jahan Beg described by Mr. Hicks, showed himself ostentatiously inattentive to all that went on. Still, when the members of the Mission left the Palace and returned to their head-quarters to reassure the anxious hearts of Lady Haigh and Georgia, they were able to suggest some reasons for hopefulness. At any rate, the Mission had been graciously received, and that at once, and the King seemed to be in a state of suspended judgment, rather than of settled hostility, while no parade had been made of the presence of the Scythian envoy in the city.

Once more the party at the Mission met on the terrace after dinner to discuss coffee and things in general, and once again Chanda Lal interrupted the harmony of the group. Stratford was in the midst of a description of some political crisis which had occurred at Czarigrad during his residence there, when the bearer mounted the steps and made his way noiselessly to Sir Dugald's side.

"Highness, in the court there is an old man wrapped in a mantle who wishes to see you. He says he is the Amir Jahan Beg."

Low as were Chanda Lal's tones, the rest of the party heard the words, and a thrill of excitement ran through them. Why should this notoriously anti-foreign ruler come disguised and under cover of night to see Sir Dugald? Surely the situation promised fresh developments? But Sir Dugald was neither flattered nor interested.

"This is beyond endurance!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "It was bad enough to be disturbed in the evening by that American fellow; but for a native it is a little too much! The door is shut, bearer."

"I bring a message to the Queen of England's Envoy from Rustam Khan," said a crisp, penetrating voice in Ethiopian, and the startled hearers turned to see an elderly man with a grey beard standing on the steps behind them, his head and shoulders still shrouded in his cloak. "Let the Envoy bid the servant depart, and I will do my errand."

"You can go, bearer," said Sir Dugald. "By-the-bye, we shall want Mr. Kustendjian," he added, and rose to call back Chanda Lal, but the stranger stepped before him, and laid a hand upon his arm.

"There is no need of an interpreter," said Jahan Beg in English. "Haigh—Dugald Haigh—have you forgotten me?"

"Good heavens!" cried Sir Dugald, stepping back. "Can it be possible? You are John Bigg—the man who disappeared?"

"Exactly," said Jahan Beg. "The man who disappeared, and

made a nine days' wonder for his friends at Tajpur, every one of whom had a separate discreditable theory to account for his disappearance."

"That was quite unnecessary," returned Sir Dugald, "for anyone who knew you and knew Beatrice Wynn."

"As you did? Well—by-the-bye, what has become of Beatrice Wynn?"

"Dead, years ago. Typhoid—in Assam somewhere."

"And for years I have been dead in Ethiopia. Young men"—he turned suddenly to the staff, who had been endeavouring, with indifferent success, to get up an interest in conversation among themselves—"let me give you a warning. Never throw up everything for a woman's sake. Never spoil your lives because you have been disappointed in love. There is not a woman on earth that's worth it."

"Present company always excepted, of course," said Fitz, with a bow to Lady Haigh and Georgia. Jahan Beg looked at him with a grim smile.

"No woman will ever spoil your life," he said, "though I don't necessarily think the better of you for that. As for the rest of you, you are beyond the impressionable age, I think. You begin to see that there is something else to live for besides love. I was twenty-three when I threw aside as good prospects in the Public Works Department as a man need want, and cut myself off from my friends and my country, and all for the sake of a woman who had never cared a scrap for me. She was only amusing herself with me for a while—it's a way they have. I can see now that she painted and dyed, and that she was years older than I was—she was a widow—but I didn't see it then. I thought her as beautiful as an angel, and as good—heavens! how I did believe in that woman—and when she married the Commissioner, I chucked everything and left."

"Leaving your friends to get your servants brought into court on suspicion of having made away with you, and your enemies to look for discrepancies in your accounts," said Sir Dugald.

"It was all a long time ago; but I hope no one was hanged," said Jahan Beg.

"No; there was no possible evidence against any of the servants, and people began to talk of suicide, and to accuse the fair Beatrice under their breath of driving you to desperation. In self-defence she let it become known that your last letter to her had talked much of going to the dogs and of a ruined life, but had contained no threats. Then public opinion veered round again to a certain extent; but the Commissioner accepted another post before very long."

"And for that woman's sake," said Jahan Beg fiercely, "I have lost everything. It is enough to make a man's blood boil, Haigh. I am an alien and a renegade all the rest of my days on account of a woman for whom I have not now even a kindly thought."

"We have all made fools of ourselves at one time or another," said Sir Dugald soothingly. "You have paid heavily enough for that madness of yours, Bigg, and now you can come back with us when we leave this place and get into the world again."

"Not quite. I have given hostages to fortune, you see."

"What? Oh, you have married a native?"

"Yes. My wife is the King's cousin. She was a widow when I married her, and very rich—for this part of the world. She showed a slight disposition to exact a very rigid etiquette at first—expected me not to sit down in her presence without being invited, and so on, which might have led to friction if I had not explained my views clearly at once. We have never quarrelled since, and we never interfere with one another."

"You have no children?" asked Lady Haigh.

"I have one daughter. She is married to Rustam Khan."

"An English girl married to a native?" cried Georgia.

"She is only half English, at any rate."

"But isn't Rustam Khan a Mohammedan?"

"Of course; so is she, so is my wife, so am I—in so far as I am anything. I told you that I was a renegade, and now you know the worst of me."

"But how did you find your way here, Bigg?" asked Sir Dugald, while Georgia was silent in dismay.

"You know I was always fond of disguising myself and going about among the natives? Well, when I left Tajpur I made up my mind to wander about for a time as a *fakir*, and at last I got into Khemistan. Things were not so settled there then as they are now; St. George Keeling was hard at work pacifying the country. I fell among thieves, that is, among the hillmen, who would not believe me when I said I was an Englishman, but were afraid to kill me lest it should turn out to be true after all. They compromised matters by making me a slave, and gave me a wretched time of it. At last the Ethiopians made a raid upon their villages, and I was so glad to see the tables turned that I joined the invaders. The hillmen were wiped out, and when the fight was over the Ethiopians thought of me. They never imagined I was an Englishman, and I didn't tell them. Well—I may as well make a clean breast of it—they offered me lands, and so on, and a command in their army if I would turn Mohammedan, thinking that I was an idolater, like the hillmen, and I had had time to recover a little from the knockdown blow Beatrice gave me, and life seemed worth living again, and I consented. It's a sordid affair enough, you see—just a bartering of one's conscience against life and wealth—and it was not worth it. I have tried it, and I have come to the conclusion that one's wretched life is a poor exchange for country and religion. Another warning for you, young men."

"Then you rose to power after all?" said Sir Dugald.

"I did. It doesn't sound a moral arrangement—to anyone who



only looks on the surface. My lands lie near the frontier of the Scythian sphere of influence, and before my day they were always liable to incursions from the tribes under Scythian protection. I put a stop to that, and my fame spread. One Ethiopian chief after another made alliance with me, until I was at the head of a confederation extending all along that frontier. Then it was that the King acknowledged my power. Old Fath-ud-Din, who had taken a dislike to me from the very first, pointed out to him that the position I had built up for myself was a menace to the throne. Consequently his advice was that I should be summoned to Court, and quietly put out of the way. Fortunately for me, however, the King took someone else's advice that time. He knew that I was the only man that could hold that frontier, and he preferred to consolidate my power and attach my interests to his own by offering me his cousin's hand. I knew better than to refuse, and from that time I became generally known as the Amir Jahan Beg, one of the pillars of the state. At least I can say that I have done my best for my district. The people are better governed there than anywhere else in the kingdom, and the chiefs under me have taken to copying some of my ways. That is something, but I can't pretend that the game is worth the candle. I used to feel it more than I do now, especially when my daughter was a child. There was so much that was English about her that it nearly broke my heart to think of her growing up and leading the life of an Ethiopian woman. I used to plan to take her with me and make a dash for liberty through Scythian territory, but it seemed mean to go away and leave my wife, and I shouldn't have known what to do with her if I had got her to come too. Then Rustam Khan, who was a delicate boy, and pined in the city, came to live with us, and I grew as fond of him as if he had been my own son. He is the only person here who knows that I am an Englisman, but I have taught him a little English, and we talk it together sometimes. When he grew up, he wished to marry my daughter, and though I knew it would make Fath-ud-Din and all his crew my open enemies, instead of merely my ill-wishers, I could not refuse him, for he promised to take no other wife if I would give her to him."

"Then is that the origin of the rivalry between Rustam Khan and Fath-ud-Din?" asked Sir Dugald.

"No, it has merely aggravated it. Rustam Khan is the son of the King's first wife, but Antar Khan's mother, the Vizier's sister, has royal blood in her veins through her mother, and no one can decide which of the two sons has the best right to succeed. Consequently the King gives them each a turn of favour, and plays them off one against the other, to prevent either of them from forming a party. Just now, Antar Khan, which of course means Fath-ud-Din, is uppermost."

"And that bears seriously on our position here?"

"It does; for Rustam Khan is the strongest advocate of the Eng-

lish alliance, while Fath-ud-Din, out of pure contrariness, has fanned the hopes of the Scythians. There is a wretched Jew fellow, supposed to have been entrusted by the Scythian and Neustrian governments with a secret mission, in the town now, but he is kept in the background until the King has made up his mind about you. Whatever Fath-ud-Din can do against you, he will do, you may depend upon that, and he is all-powerful just now. Rustam Khan finds it advisable to remain at home and pretend to be ill. He would have come to see you before this, but that he knows his visit would be at once represented as part of a plot to dethrone his father and place himself on the throne. Even I have to be careful. Naturally I have spoken in favour of the English alliance, and joined with Rustam Khan in doing all I could to further it, but Fath-ud-Din has begun to smell a rat. He can't dream that I am an Englishman, but I believe he thinks I have been in British territory and brought dangerous ideas into Ethiopia with me, and he would ruin me if he could. That is why I am bound, while supporting the object of your Mission here, to appear indifferent or even hostile to yourselves personally, and why I dare not be seen coming to your house. There is a horrible Yankee journalist about the place—have you come across him yet? who tried to draw me, but I put on the very haughtiest Oriental airs, and sent him away with a flea in his ear. I dare say he means me no harm personally, but I know he is very thick with Fath-ud-Din, and that is enough for me. He has not got much change out of Jahan Beg."

"Mr. Hicks has already presented himself here," said Sir Dugald. "What with him, and Fath-ud-Din, and the Neustro-Scythian agent, and your precarious position in the country, Bigg, it would appear to a Western mind that our prospects of success were rather faint."

"I will do what I can to help you," returned Jahan Beg; "secretly, of course. In public, you must expect to find me slightly troublesome in weighing your proposals, and rigid in exacting the full pound of flesh and an ounce or two extra; but such hints as I can give you privately I will. Don't tell me what your instructions are, I don't want to know them. I only say, don't insist on a permanent British resident with an escort in Kubbet-ul-Haj, for you won't get it, and you will be playing into the hands of Scythia. The Jew agent has assured the King already that you are sure to demand that, and that such an arrangement would be the first step towards annexing the kingdom. If you must be represented here, stand out for a Consul-General at Iskandarbagh, the big town you passed just after crossing the frontier, with a native Wakil at the capital. Then don't demand any territory. The Scythians have damaged their case already by hinting at a rectification of frontier. A reciprocal commercial treaty you are empowered to conclude, I suppose; but you must agree that no foreigner shall enter Ethiopia without the King's

passport. There will be difficulties too about the legal status of foreigners——”

“Excuse me, Bigg, but would you not prefer to discuss these things with me in the office? They are a little technical to form an evening entertainment for the ladies. Mr. Stratford, perhaps you will kindly accompany us?”

“The ladies must excuse me, remembering that it has been a long-desired relief to talk English once more to anyone who can understand it properly. You have not presented me to your wife, Haigh.”

Sir Dugald performed the ceremony briefly, and then introduced the guest to Georgia, explaining that she was St. George Keeling’s daughter.

“And you are the lady doctor?” said Jahan Beg. “I have one thing to ask of you, Miss Keeling. It is possible that at the palace you may see my daughter, Nur Jahan, Rustam Khan’s wife. Have pity upon her, and don’t make her discontented with her life. She must stay here all her days, and she is happy with her husband and her baby. You need not describe to her English life and the Christian position of women, and all those other luxuries of civilisation of which you are the culminating product, need you? It could do no good, and it certainly would do a great deal of harm, for things of that kind are absolutely unattainable here.”

“I will try not to put new ideas into her head, if they would only make her unhappy,” said Georgia, rather reluctantly; “but surely you have told her about England?”

“I have told her nothing. ‘Where ignorance is bliss’—you know the rest. Although I have married her to a Mohammedan—and roused your indignation by doing so—I did what I could to keep her happy as his wife. She does not know that I am an Englishman, and I have never even taught her English; although for years I used to hold long conversations with myself or with imaginary friends when I was alone, that I might not forget my own language.”

And Georgia was left oppressed with a sense—which had often beset her before—of the complexity of life, while Jahan Beg went on his way. She sat looking out over the Moslem city, and pondering the various problems which the Amir’s words had started in her mind, while Lady Haigh and Fitz settled down to a game of halma, and North carried off Dr. Headlam to show him a new kind of locust, which one of the servants had caught and brought to him. The doctor welcomed the discovery with rapture, and conveyed the insect in triumph to his own quarters, but Dick returned to the terrace. Georgia turned to him impulsively as he mounted the steps close beside her.

“What is your opinion of compromises? Can they ever be morally justifiable?”

Now it was more than a month since Dick and Georgia had exchanged any conversation but the merest commonplaces, and Dick was so well satisfied with this state of affairs, that he vowed to himself

every day that he would take care that their acquaintance remained on this rather restricted footing for the future. Yet although it was evident that Georgia had not intentionally appealed to him in preference to anyone else, and he felt that she would have attacked Sir Dugald or Stratford on the subject, if either of them had appeared at the moment, as readily as himself, he sat down near her, and hastily collected his views on the question of compromise.

"It rather depends upon the nature of the compromises, doesn't it?" he asked, "whether they refer to essentials or non-essentials, I mean. For instance, one's whole existence is a series of compromises."

"In the sense in which all social life is a compromise between the demands of the individual and those of the race?" said Georgia. "Yes, but those refer to non-essentials, of course."

"Non-essentials to the race now; but I dare say they seemed essential enough to the individual at one time. For instance, in the district in India in which I served first, the natives thought it essential to offer human sacrifices every year. Their crops depended upon it, they said. But we have taught them otherwise, and now they compromise matters by sacrificing goats."

"But that was not really an essential matter; it was only that they thought it so. What I want to know is, how can one tell, in questions of right and wrong, where conciliation ends and compromise begins?"

"That is the office of all great leaders and statesmen, I suppose; to point out a path which shall conciliate as many people, and compromise as few principles, as possible. On the whole, the world is on the side of compromise, I think—when it is called conciliation. The people who object to both the name and the reality generally become martyrs."

"Martyrs!" said Georgia slowly. "It is easy enough to say the word; but think what it means!"

"Ah; I see that it is our friend Jahan Beg's story which has awakened your sudden interest in compromises."

"Not exactly his story; but what he said to me. It made me wonder whether I had done right in coming here. Perhaps you don't know that when I agreed to come it was expressly stipulated that I was to make no attempt to introduce Christianity into the King's household?"

"That seems a very obvious and necessary precaution," said Dick, delighted to find Georgia talking to him so frankly. "You could do no good, as Jahan Beg said; but you might do a great deal of harm, both to the poor women and to the Mission."

"But it almost seems to me that I was wrong in reasoning in that way. It is like hiding one's colours—nearly as bad as doing evil that good may come."

"Not doing evil, surely, Miss Keeling? As a medical missionary, half your work is concerned with the bodies of your patients. You

can do that still, and you are not forbidden to answer questions if the ladies ask them."

"But I know they won't ask me questions of that kind. My Khemistan experiences have shown me that they will only talk about the merest trivialities, or else ask me for poisons."

"Then it can't be your fault. At any rate, you will make friends with the ladies, and perhaps the memory of your visit may prepare the way for a regular missionary when the country is opened up later on," suggested Dick, the fluency of his reasoning astonishing himself.

"I am afraid I looked upon Kubbet-ul-Haj too much as a stepping-stone to Khemistan. I thought perhaps the Government might allow me to settle on the frontier and practise there if I accomplished this business successfully."

"Well, do you know, I think that was rather a good idea, Miss Keeling. You might even itinerate into Ethiopia if the King was well-disposed towards you, and there could be no mistake as to your status then. But you are not thinking of refusing to treat the poor Queen now that you are here, and leaving her to go on suffering until a lady doctor with a more elastic conscience can be sent out?"

"No, of course not; it would be cruel as well as absurd. Besides, it would be breaking my word. But don't you ever feel puzzled about your duty, Major North, or afraid that in some particular case you may have acted wrongly?"

"I don't think so," returned Dick meditatively. "Not that I am a very good judge, for things have always been pretty clear for me. I have been under orders a good deal, you know, and then my only business was to obey, and when you are thrown on your own responsibility, you try only to do your duty, and act on the square. You know your father's motto, Miss Keeling? Two or three of his Khemistan men have told me that he gave it to them when they began to work under him. This was the way it usually went: 'You are here for the honour of your country and the good of the natives,' he would say when they joined. 'Never desert a friend, never disown an agent, never deceive an enemy. You will go on duty to-morrow, and may God bless you.' I wish I had known him. It is a distinction to have served under such a man."

"Highness," said a voice at Dick's elbow, before Georgia could answer, and they both turned to see Chanda Lal, who had mounted the steps noiselessly with his bare feet, standing beside them, "there is another old man in the court, wrapped up in a mantle, and he says he is the grand Vizier, Fath-ud-Din. He asks to see the *burra sahib*, and he will not be turned away."

"Good gracious!" cried Dick. "We shall have all Kubbet-ul-Haj here before long. It only wants the King and Rustam Khan to make things lively. But if Fath-ud-Din meets Jahan Beg, there'll be murder done. Miss Keeling, while I go and parley with this old wretch, do you mind warning the Chief to get rid of Jahan Beg? I

shouldn't wonder if we have to let him down through a window into the street behind, for it won't do for him to pass through the courtyard."

He ran down the steps, and Georgia hurried to Sir Dugald's private office, where she found him and Stratford in earnest confabulation with Jahan Beg. The state of affairs was quickly explained, and Stratford hastened the visitor away to the back of the house. Here, when the new-comer was safely closeted with Sir Dugald, Dick joined him, and together they succeeded in letting Jahan Beg down into the lane, where he alighted softly on a convenient rubbish-heap, and whence he made the best of his way home.

It was not until the rest of the party were thinking of going to bed that Sir Dugald succeeded in getting rid of his visitor and returned to the terrace. He smiled grimly as he glanced at the expectant faces which awaited him.

"The worthy Fath-ud-Din has prepared a very pretty little plot," he said, "which is meant to remove both Jahan Beg and Rustam Khan from his path, and we are expected to help."

"We shall get into trouble," remarked Lady Haigh oracularly, "if all the conspirators in Kubbet-ul-Haj make this house a rendezvous when they want to plot against one another."

"We shall," agreed Sir Dugald; "and it is a mystery to me what these good people see in our faces that leads them to think we shall be willing to forward their schemes. I suppose it is only natural that Bigg should wish to utilise us as a means of getting his son-in-law acknowledged as heir to the throne; but I did not expect Fath-ud-Din. It seems that he has for a long time suspected Jahan Beg of being an Englishman, and the suspicion became a certainty yesterday, owing to his ostentatious lack of interest in our entry. Jahan Beg thought that his bearing showed how patriotic an Ethiopian he had become; but Fath-ud-Din argued that such disregard of such a show could only be due to his having seen similar sights often before."

"I hope you taxed Fath-ud-Din with being an Englishman on the same grounds," said Lady Haigh.

"Certainly not," replied Sir Dugald. "You forget that he was ill. His illness may have been diplomatic and momentary; but it has to be accepted as a fact. Well, Hicks supplied the next link in the chain. It seems that Fath-ud-Din granted him the interview which Jahan Beg refused, and in the course of conversation asked him casually what he would think if he heard that a solitary Englishman had lived in Ethiopia disguised for years. Hicks replied, as most men would naturally do, that he should conclude he had done something which had made British territory too hot to hold him, and had run away from fear of the law. That struck Fath-ud-Din, and he came to tell me of his suspicions, and to suggest that I should request the King to give up Jahan Beg as an escaped criminal. He assured me that he and his party would give me all possible support, which I



could well believe; and he let out that he anticipated that Rustam Khan would be involved in his father-in-law's downfall. That would leave the way clear for Antar Khan, to whom Fath-ud-Din hopes to marry his daughter. A suitable *bakhshish* was also understood, and in return for these various boons, Fath-ud-Din would further the objects of the Mission, and guarantee its success."

"And I hope you kicked him down the steps?" said Lady Haigh.

"No, Elma; I did not. I should have thought you knew by this time that my disposition was eminently a peaceful one. I merely told Fath-ud-Din that I knew of no criminal answering to the description of Jahan Beg, but that if he could find out what he had done, and it was sufficiently heinous, I would apply for his extradition with pleasure. With that he had to be content, leaving us a breathing-space."

"I suppose you will be able to get the treaty concluded while he is hunting about for proofs of Jahan Beg's guilt?" said Georgia.

"That is what we must hope to do. I was most careful to make everything hinge on his own efforts. It was necessary to avoid like poison anything that might sound like offering him help in his quest, or he would have understood it as a definite pledge to assist him by fair means or foul to ruin Jahan Beg."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BAROMETER FALLS.

IN spite of the lukewarm encouragement he had received, hope must have told a flattering tale to the Vizier Fath-ud-Din when he left the Residency after his interview with Sir Dugald, for it became evident very soon that the hindrances which had threatened to obstruct the path of the Mission had suddenly been removed. Rustam Khan was restored to a measure of his father's favour and allowed to appear at Court, besides being permitted to speak in the council on behalf of the English alliance, while the Neustro-Scythian agent found his promises received with unconcealed incredulity, and was tantalised with evasive answers to his demands. Of these changes the party at the Mission were kept informed both by Jahan Beg and by the Vizier himself, the latter losing no opportunity of insisting on the virulence with which his rival was opposing the English proposals, and the eagerness with which he advised the extortion of every possible concession. If it had not been for the explanation given behind the scenes by Jahan Beg himself, it would have been impossible for Sir Dugald to resist the conclusion, towards which Fath-ud-Din laboured continually to urge him, that the Amir's hatred of his native country was deep-rooted and had a sinister origin, but



the Vizier's object was so apparent that it was not difficult to distinguish the embroidery which he added to the speeches he professed to report. Jahan Beg's opposition was all on points of detail, not of principle; and although he would haggle for hours over the rate of an import duty, or the terms on which an imaginary passport was to be granted, Sir Dugald forgave him the worry he caused in consideration of his services in bringing his colleagues and the King to look at matters from a business point of view. It was the Ethiopian idea that the King was the greatest monarch on earth, and that he could settle any trouble that might arise by the simple expedient of ordering the heads of the disturbers of the peace to be brought him, and it was difficult at first to wean the people, and especially the Amirs who formed the royal council, from this mediæval way of looking at things. In spite of Jahan Beg's invaluable help in this respect, however, Sir Dugald did his best more than once to induce him to abandon his simulated policy of obstruction and support the Mission heartily, reminding him that he could not now deceive Fath-ud-Din, who knew him to be an Englishman. But Jahan Beg remained obdurate, declaring that if his proceedings did not blind Fath-ud-Din, at least they continued to deceive the rest of the Amirs, who would at once suspect him of having been bribed by the English should he appear to be suddenly converted to a warm interest in the treaty, while the Vizier himself, having already concealed for some time the fact which had come to his knowledge, was bound still to keep it secret, lest he should be punished for not revealing it before.

As a result of Jahan Beg's educational work, and Fath-ud-Din's unexpected complaisance, Sir Dugald and the staff betook themselves day after day to the Palace, and were conducted at once to the King's hall of audience. Here seats of rather an uncomfortable and nondescript character were arranged for them, for the camp-chairs they had brought with them were the only chairs in Kubbet-ul-Haj, or possibly in all Ethiopia, and a laboured conversation took place. When the King had satisfied a portion of his curiosity respecting men and things in England and Khemistan, Sir Dugald would contrive to lead the talk round to the more important matters in hand, and in this way the various clauses of the proposed treaty were discussed in turn, notes of the proceedings being taken in Ethiopian by the King's scribe and the interpreter Kustendjian, and in English by Fitz Anstruther. When the Englishmen had taken their departure, the points touched upon would be discussed afresh by the King and the Amirs, and if no satisfactory conclusion had been reached, they reappeared the next morning with great regularity, while if all was well, the discussion moved on to a fresh stage.

In this way time passed pleasantly, varied with a certain amount of incident, so far as regarded Sir Dugald and his staff, but for the ladies it was at first very different. True they had their own terrace,

where they could go about unveiled, and their own courtyard in which to take exercise. When Georgia was in a cheerful frame of mind she called this court her quarter-deck; when she was feeling depressed she alluded to it as her prison-yard, and here she paced about during the cooler hours of each day until Sir Dugald told her that her feet would wear a path in the stones. Sometimes, when public business prevented the King from receiving the Mission, its members would escort the ladies for a ride, but it was necessary to choose secluded tracks for these excursions, since public opinion in Kubbet-ul-Haj did not permit women to ride with men, except simply for protection on a journey.

But when the Mission had spent about a month in the city, there came a change for Georgia. By way of propitiating Sir Dugald, who was beginning to wax exceedingly wrathful over the King's ostentatious forgetfulness of the urgent request he had made for a lady doctor, Fath-ud-Din ventured to remind his august master of Miss Keeling's existence, and her presence at his desire in Kubbet-ul-Haj. The King happened to be in a good temper at the moment, or perhaps his conscience had been pricking him for his neglect of Rustam Khan's unfortunate mother, and the result of the reminder was the arrival at the Mission one morning of a covered litter carried by four men, and accompanied by an escort of cavalry, at the head of which rode a gorgeous negro who brought the intimation that the doctor lady was requested to wait on the Queen.

That was only the first of many days on which Georgia ensconced herself in the litter with her maid Rahah, and with the curtains closely drawn was borne off to the palace. A very short preliminary examination convinced her that the Queen was suffering from cataract in both eyes, and that an operation was absolutely necessary. But the matter did not appear by any means of so simple a character to the dwellers in the harem. Even when, with the aid of the Khemistani girl, Georgia had succeeded in getting things explained, in highly colloquial Ethiopian, to the Queen and her attendants, she found that they all shrank with horror from the idea of the operation. It was not merely that they distrusted her, as an alien both in race and religion, but they were strongly of the opinion that whereas the use of any amount of medicine, the nastier the better, was lawful in cases of disease, the employment of the knife to give relief was a blasphemous interference with the designs of Providence. In vain Georgia told of the wonderful instances of recovery, following an operation such as she intended to perform, which had come within her own experience; it was Rahah who at last placed the question before the Queen in a way that appealed to her. Whatever happened was incontrovertibly due to the decrees of fate; if it was fated that the Queen should be blind, blind she would continue to be; but if the operation proved successful, it would be clear evidence that she was not fated to be blind. Influenced by

Rahah's logic, the Queen consented, with great reluctance, to allow the matter to be referred to her husband, and the next day Georgia, with Rahah as interpreter, held a colloquy with the King on the subject through a grating which effectually precluded either party from gaining a glimpse of the other. The King was not so easily moved by Rahah's eloquence as his wife had been, but eventually a compromise was agreed upon. It was evident to Georgia that, owing both to fright and to the sorrows of the past few months, the Queen was in no state for the operation to be performed at present. Some delay was therefore inevitable, and the King was at last brought to consent that if a week or two of careful diet and nursing, together with cheerful society and the blessing of hopefulness, should prove to have a beneficial effect on the patient's general health, then the plan might be tried.

It seemed to Georgia that in view of the state of things in the palace, each portion of the prescription was more unattainable than the rest, but after two or three days of vain endeavours to instruct the shiftless harem servants in the arts of nursing and of invalid cookery, and to restore tone to the mind of the poor Queen, weakened and saddened as it was by years of sorrow, she found a new ally at her side. Coming into the Queen's room one day, she saw seated on the divan a tall girl with a fresh English face, blue-eyed and fair-haired, holding a closely-swathed baby in her arms. Although the stranger wore the Ethiopian dress, Georgia would have greeted her at once as a fellow-countrywoman, if she had not turned and stared at her with undisguised interest and pleasure, saying something in Ethiopian to the Queen. Then a great pang of pity seized Georgia's heart, for she knew that the English girl before her must be Nur Jahan, Jahan Beg's daughter and Rustam Khan's wife.

Remembering her promise to Nur Jahan's father, however, Georgia composed her face and took her usual seat beside her patient. The Queen was so much more cheerful this morning, that it was evident she enjoyed the presence of her daughter-in-law and grandson, and after a while, to Georgia's delight, she brightened visibly at Nur Jahan's suggestion, that when the operation was over she would be able to see the baby. When the medical examination was over, the young wife felt herself at liberty to talk, and Georgia learnt that, although she had now come for a few days to the palace solely for the purpose of cheering her mother-in-law, she had not quitted it very long. When Rustam Khan fell into disfavour, he had put his wife and her week-old baby under his mother's protection at once, fearing that neither his house nor that of Jahan Beg would be safe from the rabble of the city, who were warm partisans of Fath-ud-Din. With high glee, Nur Jahan narrated how her husband had come to visit her in secret, always at hours when the King was not likely to enter the harem, disguised sometimes as a woman and sometimes as a negro, in order to escape the Vizier's spies, and how once he had

actually met his father outside the Queen's door, but veiling his face and stepping aside respectfully, had passed him without being recognised. To Georgia, the possibility of such adventures within the sacred walls of the harem was a new thing, and she enjoyed the gusto with which Nur Jahan related them. But the Queen thought differently, and began to moan feebly, as she pulled at the edge of the coverlet.

"Thou art always thus, Nur Jahan," she said querulously; "laughing and rejoicing when thy lord is in peril of his life. An Ethiopian woman, seeing her husband in such straits, would have wept an ocean of tears, and refused to be comforted until times changed; but I have seen thee, when Rustam Khan had but just gone from thee, planning eagerly how he should enter the palace on the next occasion, without shedding a tear."

"But it was that which pleased my lord, O my mother," said Nur Jahan, eager to defend herself. "What delight had there been in our meetings, if I had only sat at his feet and bedewed them with tears? There was so much to tell, and so much to hear; how could I weep when my lord was with me? And when he was gone, was it not happier for me to consider how I might see him again, rather than weep because he could not be with me still?"

"Go thy ways, Nur Jahan," said the elder woman bitterly. "Thou too wilt one day learn that although the life of all women is sad, that of a woman who is also a king's wife is saddest of all. How canst thou love thy lord as I, his mother, love him? Thine eyes are as bright as when he married thee, while mine are blind with weeping for him. But he loves the bright eyes better than the blind ones, and is it to be wondered at?" and the Queen rocked herself to and fro, and wailed hopelessly.

"O my mother, wilt thou break my heart?" sobbed Nur Jahan, throwing herself down beside her. "Can we not both love my lord? I know well that thy love for him has lasted longer, but must it needs be greater than mine? My lord's love is my life, and yet thou wilt not believe it because I do not always weep when I am sad. O doctor lady, dost thou not believe that I love my lord?"

"What does the doctor lady know of it?" demanded the Queen. "But thou art my son's beloved, Nur Jahan, and for that I love thee also. But I would thou wert as we are. Thou art of the idolaters through thy father, and thou dost not grow like us. But thy life is like ours, and, as years pass on, it will be more and more like mine, and if thou wilt not weep then, what wilt thou do? Those who do not weep go mad."

It was evident to Georgia that Nur Jahan was comforting herself with the thought that her husband was very unlike his father, while the Queen expected that in course of time he would exactly resemble him, but she saw that the excitement was bad for her patient, and interposed prosaically, with a suggestion as to the preparation of

beef-tea, which Nur Jahan took up at once, displaying practical powers, which encouraged Georgia to give her a first lesson in home nursing. But in spite of this cheering fact, Georgia's heart still ached as she was carried back to the Mission in her litter, for she could not forget the contrast between the girlish form of Nur Jahan and the bowed and broken figure of the old Queen, who seemed so sure that her daughter-in-law's life must one day come to resemble her own. But there was a trait in Nur Jahan's character which had no part in that of the Queen, and which would go far to render her lot even harder—the adventurous spirit which her mother-in-law so bitterly resented, and which had caused her to find a certain enjoyment in the shifts and devices to which her husband had been obliged to have recourse in order to see her.

"Jahan Beg ought to have escaped from the country and brought her to England, as he thought of doing," was Georgia's mental comment. "It is his spirit she inherits, and it is cruel of him to rest satisfied with the life to which he has condemned her. She is ready to welcome any excitement, even of a disagreeable kind, as a relief to the monotony of her existence. I can see that she is pining for outside interests, though she doesn't know it. In a man of English blood this would seem quite natural and proper to everyone, and why should it be different for a woman? And what a life it is to which she has to look forward! Even if Rustam Khan keeps his promise and marries no other wife, she can only spend her days in doing nothing. Nothing to do for husband or children, in the house or outside, and to be surrounded by a number of other women as idle as herself! 'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.' I had rather have my thirty-two years of life than the poor Queen's fifty, queen and wife and mother though she is. Her only advantage in being Queen is that she must not do the little pieces of work which would have fallen to her in another position. As a wife she has to share her husband with an indefinite number of other women, and as a mother she sees her sons treated like Rustam Khan, and her daughters condemned to the same kind of life as herself. Perhaps Nur Jahan's children may inherit enough of her character to enable them to break the spell; but I am afraid the change won't come in her time. The East moves so slowly."

Since Georgia's thoughts had been so deeply stirred on this subject, it is not wonderful that she communicated her views to Dick when they happened to be talking on the terrace that evening. She felt it a necessity to share her misgivings with someone, and to her surprise he received them with unwonted meekness.

"Kipling doesn't agree with you," was all he said in answer to her estimate of the probable happiness of the Eastern as compared with that of the Western woman.

"Kipling!" said Georgia, with high scorn.

"I thought you admired him?"

"So I do. I think he is an excellent authority on men—at least, the men seem to find it so—but what can he, or any man, know about women? At best they can only see results and guess at causes. They observe very carefully all that they can see, and give us the result of their observations in knowing little remarks, half cynical, and half patronising, and think they have gauged a woman's nature to its very depths. Then she does something that throws all their calculations wrong, and they say that she is shallow and fickle and, above all, unwomanly; whereas it is only that either their observations or their deductions were incorrect."

"Still," said Dick, "I am inclined to agree with a very comforting doctrine I heard you enunciating to Stratford the other night. You were speaking of the principle of balance, and you said that when one side of the truth had been exclusively insisted upon for a time the pendulum swung back and the other side became prominent until it was the first one's turn again. I thought it was a very good idea—for the people who can keep just in the middle. Those who rush to either extreme must find themselves rather left when the pendulum swings."

"But what has that to do with our present subject?" asked Georgia.

"It seems to me to apply. You see, the New—I beg your pardon; I know you dislike the term—the modern female has had rather a long innings lately. You have often said that you don't agree with all her developments, which seems pretty clear proof that she has, at any rate, approached the extreme point. Well, Kipling comes to show us the other side of the matter, exaggerated, perhaps; but that is unavoidable, owing to the exaggerations on the lady's part. At least, that is how it strikes me."

"North, where are you?" said Stratford, appearing suddenly on the terrace. "The Chief wants you for something."

Dick rose and disappeared, with an apology to Georgia, who leaned back in her chair and smiled.

"He is improving wonderfully," she said to herself. "Two months ago he would never have talked as he has to-night. Crushing assertions without any proof used to be his idea of arguments. He must have taken a lesson from Mr. Stratford. Was he really listening all the time I was talking to him the other night? He has certainly changed very much, and I am very glad of it. It would have been most unpleasant if the only man who could not bring himself to be civil to me was such an old friend, and Mab's brother."

If Mabel could have heard this soliloquy, it is probable that she would have smiled darkly to herself, and remarked that her dear Georgie must have been considerably piqued by Dick's cavalier behaviour for her to make such a point of having overcome his opposition to herself. However, there was no one at hand to point out to Georgia that she felt more satisfaction in one amicable con-



versation with her former lover than in all the attentions of Stratford and the doctor, who entertained no prejudice against medical women, and always appreciated the honour of a talk with her. It may be that it was merely the feeling that she had been victorious in disarming Dick's hostility which gave such a zest to her intercourse with him; but if this was so, an incident which occurred a few days later ought to have cast some additional light upon the subject.

Matters had been going very well at the Palace of late, and Sir Dugald had the satisfaction of knowing that all the clauses of the projected treaty had been in substance agreed to. It now only remained to draw it up in formal shape, and to ratify it by the signatures, or rather seals, of the contracting parties. While the draughtsmen on both sides were busy reducing the notes taken during Sir Dugald's audiences of the King into suitably involved phraseology, the members of the Mission enjoyed a short holiday. They made several expeditions into the districts lying around the city, and one day the King invited the gentlemen of the party to visit a summer-palace which he had erected on a spur of the hills some fifteen miles away. Mr. Hicks, who had remained doggedly at his post in spite of the rebuff he had received, and contrived to glean sufficient news from his talks with Fath-ud-Din and the gossip of the Mission servants to fill the requisite number of columns per week for his paper when supplemented by his own lively imagination, was to be of the party, and the younger men anticipated some amusement in baffling his insatiable curiosity. They rode off in high spirits, the outward expression of which was modified in deference to Sir Dugald, to whom the excursion appeared in anything but a pleasurable light; and Lady Haigh and Georgia resigned themselves to a long, slow, quiet day. It was not one of the days on which Georgia visited her patient at the Palace, and therefore Lady Haigh and she wrote up their diaries with great industry, compiled several lengthy descriptive letters for the benefit of friends at home, and filled in odd corners of time with reading and talking. As the afternoon wore on, Lady Haigh went to remind the cook to make a particular kind of cake, likely to be appreciated after a long, dusty ride, for tea, and Georgia was left alone on the terrace.

As she sat there reading the noise of horses' feet in the outer court came to her ears, and she dropped her book, wondering whether the party had already returned. Presently Fitz Anstruther came in sight under the archway which furnished a means of communication between the two courtyards, and catching sight of her on the terrace, hurried across, followed by Dr. Headlam. Fitz had something in his hand, carefully wrapped up in leaves and tied with wisps of grass, and as he reached the top of the steps he deposited it at Georgia's feet.

"There, Miss Keeling," he cried, in high delight, "I've got a spotted viper for you, for the collection! He's a really fine beast; that measly old specimen the doctor got hold of hasn't a look-in compared with him! See him, now," and he unrolled the wrappings



and displayed, as he said, a remarkably good specimen of the deadliest snake known to Kubbet-ul-Haj. It was only about twenty-seven inches long, but the spots, from which the Mission had given it its hopelessly unscientific name, were unusually brilliant.

"You very nearly had the chance of labelling him as a murderer," Fitz went on, holding up the snake's head and examining its fangs with the air of a connoisseur. "He reared up suddenly, just behind North, and had his head stretched out to strike. North was leaning on his elbow on the cushions, and when he saw all the Ethiopians staring at him as pale as death, he turned round. There was no time to move away, and he cut at the thing with his knife and missed. We were eating fruit just then, all smothered in snow from the hills. Stratford had his revolver out in a moment, and was going to fire, but I yelled out to him to stop. I didn't want the skin spoilt, and I knew that a shot at that distance would smash the head all to smithereens. I had my riding-crop handy, and I jumped up and managed to catch the beast such a whack, that it broke his spine or something. Anyhow, he was killed, and I brought him home all the way on purpose for you, Miss Keeling."

Georgia had turned pale and stepped back a little as Fitz looked up for her approval. Seeing her hesitation, Dr. Headlam interposed.

"It really was very neatly done, Miss Keeling, though it was a risky thing, both for Anstruther and North. When I saw the crop come down, I could hardly believe that in his ardour for science, Anstruther had not sacrificed North. It was a frightfully near business."

"Who cares about North?" Fitz wanted to know. "It's a jolly good specimen, Miss Keeling, and your beast is better than the doctor's, anyhow. Your collection will take the cake now, I know."

"Must it be stuffed?" asked Georgia, with unwonted timidity. "I don't like it. It—it frightens me."

"Oh, Miss Keeling!" cried Fitz, deeply wounded, but Dr. Headlam interposed again.

"I should be pleased to stuff it for you, Miss Keeling, but don't you think that under the circumstances it would better to take it home in spirit? It is a new species, so far as we know, and this is quite the finest specimen we have come across, so that some toxicologist might be glad to dissect it. I think we must preserve it in the interests of science."

"Oh, yes, of course, in the interests of science," said Georgia unsteadily. "It is really very foolish of me to object to it," she went on, with a nervous little laugh. "I can stand most creatures, but snakes are such horrible things. It makes me feel quite queer."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Fitz, moved to compunction. "I never thought you mightn't like it, Miss Keeling. I'll tell my boy to throw the beast away at once."

"Oh no, please don't," said Georgia, "if Dr. Headlam is kind enough to preserve it. You will keep it over at your house, with the

rest of the things, won't you, doctor? And you mustn't think I am not pleased with it, Mr. Anstruther. It was most kind and considerate of you to think of me at such an exciting moment, and I shall value the snake always as a memorial of your bravery and coolness," and Georgia rushed away to her own room, where she threw herself upon the divan and broke into wild peals of laughter. That Fitz should think of saving the snake's skin whole for her when Dick North's life was at stake! It was too funny! Georgia laughed till she cried, and Lady Haigh came in and accused her of going into hysterics—an accusation which was vehemently denied—and administered cold water and particularly pungent smelling-salts.

But the snake was duly deposited in a huge bottle of spirit, and with the rest of the collection, became a prominent object in Dr. Headlam's waiting-room. It inspired both awe and interest in the patients, especially after Fitz—who sometimes assisted the doctor in receiving his visitors—had delivered a lecture on the subject.

"I don't know when I have laughed so much," said Dr. Headlam, telling the story after dinner that evening. "I happened to be a little late in going into the surgery this morning, but when I got near the door, I became aware that Anstruther was improving the shining hour in the waiting-room. His discourse sounded so interesting that I lay low just outside and listened. It was delivered in English, helped out with all the Eastern words he knew, but it was so vividly illustrated by gestures, that it seemed to have no difficulty in penetrating into the minds of all the patients. 'These all devils,' he informed them, pointing to the bottles of specimens, 'big devils, little devils, all shut up safe. See this one?' he took down the celebrated snake, which certainly does look rather vicious, coiled up in its bottle. 'This snake-devil—ghoul—*jinni*—*shaitan*; you see? This one eye-devil,' pointing to that diseased eye which I removed for a man a fortnight ago, and took such pains to preserve, 'finger-devil, tongue-devil,' and so on. 'Now, you like me to open one of these bottles?' A delicious shiver of anticipation went through the audience as he took down the snake again. 'You know what will happen if I throw it down? There will be a great crash, and you will smell the vilest smell you ever smelt in your lives, and you will see—what you will see, and *the devil will be loose!* Now, one, two, three and——' but they were all on their knees begging and imploring him not to do it, and I judged it as well to make my appearance at that juncture."

"You will have the boys raiding your place and destroying the bottles to see what happens when the devil gets loose," said Stratford.

"I don't think so," returned the doctor. "They are all so frightened that it is as much as I can do now to get them into the same room with the collection. It is as good as a watch-dog to me."

"Anstruther will have to be careful," said Sir Dugald, with an approach to a frown. "We don't want our characters blackened by any suspicion of dealings with infernal powers. I rather wish you

had broken one of the bottles before them, doctor, to convince them that it was a joke."

"Rather it would have convinced them that I was letting out a pestilence on the country," said the doctor; "and they would simply have gone away and died of fright, which would be clear proof that I was their murderer. I think we are safer as it is."

"I never like fooling about with supernatural nonsense in these countries," said Sir Dugald. "It gives the people a handle, and they are not likely to be slow in taking it. As we four are alone together, I may give you a hint that I expect trouble before long. Things have been going too smoothly of late, and Kustendjian tells me that Hicks said to him yesterday, 'Your old man has squared Fath-ud-Din nicely up to now; but what will he do when the bill comes in? He ought to know by this time that the man who calls for the drinks pays.' I cannot flatter myself, unfortunately, that I have squared Fath-ud-Din; but if he considers that I have attempted to do it, it is quite on the cards that he will send in his bill. We can refuse payment, of course; but I am afraid that will not better our position very much."

The justice of Sir Dugald's words was recognised a little later, after another mysterious evening visit from Fath-ud-Din. The Vizier came to the Mission because he wished to know when his rival was to be permanently removed from his path. He had done all in his power to smooth the progress of the negotiations; but Sir Dugald had made no attempt to accuse Jahan Beg to the King or to demand his extradition. The answer was simple. Sir Dugald had declared his readiness to demand the surrender of Jahan Beg if it could be proved that he was in exile in consequence of any crime committed on British territory; but not a vestige of evidence that such was the case had been brought forward, and it was impossible to extradite him merely for the sake of pleasing the Grand Vizier. On hearing this, Fath-ud-Din flew into a transport of rage, and, from the words he let fall in his anger, Sir Dugald gathered that he had been expected to be prepared with a case against Jahan Beg, and false witnesses to support it, in return for the Vizier's help. This was a little too much even for Sir Dugald's self-control, and, in the few minutes that followed Fath-ud-Din probably heard a larger number of home-truths, delivered in a cold, judicial voice that was more effective than any amount of shouting, than he had ever done before in his life. Baffled and disappointed, the Minister left the Mission, muttering curses between his teeth, and was observed by Kustendjian to pause outside and shake his fist at the building, and to spit towards the flag-staff on which the Union Jack was hoisted in the outer courtyard. From which signs the discerning Armenian inferred, as Mr. Hicks had done before him, that there was trouble brewing.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE PLOT OF THE PINK.

THE story of the last attempt to rescue Marie Antoinette from the guillotine is involved in a maze of contradictions. Memoirs, letters, and police-reports of the day are at variance, and in these latter papers so improbable a part is assigned to the Queen herself, that no single statement can be relied on as correct or even credible. The actors, the means adopted, the very scenes in which the incidents recorded took place are matters of controversy, and when conflicting versions from political documents and stolen notes come to be compared, the case seems hopeless. The mind is driven out of its proper course and is half inclined to believe that a more satisfactory issue may be found out of the beaten track, and a nearer approach to truth in the pages of a novel than in any of the archives.

History has been compared to stage decorations: where splendid buildings give every illusion of substantiality until one goes behind the scenes, when marble and granite are discovered to be simply paper and paint; and there are occasions when it may be safer to trust to fiction founded on fact than to a supposed fact founded on fiction.

A member of the French Academy affirms that, having carefully studied all the public documents relating to the flight of the royal family to Varennes, he found the only really satisfactory description of it in a chapter from the pen of Alexandre Dumas. The truth is scrupulously respected, the fugitives are followed step by step, and a lesson in narrative given by which the historian might safely profit, were it not for the fact that no serious writer could hope to maintain his reputation but at the expense of brightness. An amusing historian must be at once discredited.

The *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, the most dramatic of all Dumas' entrancing novels, may safely be taken as the best picture of the time. It could not fail to be the most sensational, since it treats of an epoch without parallel in horror and interest.

From the beginning of time there have been, doubtless, terrible crimes, revolts, rebellions—days in which there was no law, no security, no retribution—where there have been cruel martyrdoms, and where the innocent have been the chief sufferers; but there has only been one tragedy like the tragedy of 1793—only one Reign of Terror.

In years of order and quietness it is difficult to picture such a day; its deeds of violence seem like dreams of a disordered fancy: the wildest imagination could conceive no greater chaos, and *le grand raconteur*, only separated from the dramatis personæ of his story by the briefest space, was able to draw them as they were in real life—

creatures of flesh and blood, with some of whom he had even spoken face to face.

Père Dumas, as the younger men were pleased to call him, was a republican, though not a communist, and had many acquaintances amongst the people: it has even been thought that one of the actors in the Plot of the Pink was personally known to him. The Tisons, the Simons, the Santerres of the Conciergerie were types which he had closely studied, and although he may have sometimes been accused of historic impossibilities, it is admitted that when he chose to be accurate he could be as accurate as anybody else.

His novel was just about to be published, under the title of *The Marquis de Rougeville*, since that was the real designation of the Queen's devoted adherent, when he received a letter from the son of his hero. It was as follows:—

"MONSIEUR,—My father's mark in the Revolution was so brief, and also so mysterious, that it is not without anxiety, being aware of your republican principles, that I see his name at the head of your forthcoming romance. I would venture to ask with what incidents you have accompanied the bare facts which attach to his name, although I am well aware of the respect you profess for fallen greatness, and your sympathy with noble devotions.

"Accept, monsieur, etc., etc.

"MARQUIS DE ROUGEVILLE."

Dumas at once replied that he was not aware of the existence of any descendant of the late Marquis, and that although the story was wholly in his favour, from that moment the Chevalier de Rougeville should cease to exist, and should become the Chevalier de Maison Rouge.

He then received a second letter:—

"MONSIEUR,—Call your story what you will. I am the last of my family, and in another hour I shall have blown out my brains.

"DE ROUGEVILLE."

Not altogether putting faith in this sensational announcement, Dumas sent his secretary for news of the Marquis, and found that he had in fact destroyed himself; but still feeling bound to keep to his word, the novel was published with the title of *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*.

In the first weeks of the Revolution, the royal family still counted a large number of faithful adherents, who kept up the illusion of a court, whilst the patient King submitted to take a minor part and to be almost effaced in the terrible drama going on around him. He made no appeal, and even when the Temple-gates had closed upon him, refused to believe in the imminence of his danger. It was not until the drums had drowned his voice in the Place de la Revolution that the Queen herself could realise the end.

That Europe should have stood still with folded arms before the appalling spectacle offered by France in 1793 is one of the historic secrets which have never yet been explained. The only sovereign prepared to take an active part against the Revolution was Gustavus of Sweden. He was about to put himself at the head of an invading army when he was shot through the breast, possibly a message from the Communists. At all events, the deed was extolled in Paris as noble and praiseworthy.

But there was a voiceless sympathy for Marie Antoinette in quarters where it might be least expected, and many tender hearts bled for her. It is a painful fact that it was not the associates of her prosperous days who showed any readiness to sacrifice personal safety for her sake ; they might bitterly lament the insults and the tortures inflicted on her, but it was in silence and inaction, whilst her true partisans were to be found amongst the people.

The list is strange.

A dustman, a confectioner, three hairdressers, two masons, a lemonade-seller, a locksmith, and a tobacconist. There were even revolutionary fanatics who would have saved her. Toulan, whose confederacy with Monsieur de Jarjays has never been denied, was a red republican elected by the Commune as one of the Temple guards on account of his animosity to *the tyrants*.

The failure of several badly-managed schemes had put a temporary cheque to futile plots when De Rougeville, returning from abroad, determined on a more resolute venture. He managed, with extraordinary address, to make himself agreeable to Michonis, the inspector of prisons, to whose especial vigilance the care of the Temple prisoners had been confided. Vain of his functions, and particularly proud of his daily interviews with the *Veuve Capet*, he was easily induced to permit the companions of his social hours a sight of her in her captivity.

Even the most turbulent sansculottes and the most austere terrorists were unable to approach the fallen Queen without an emotion they could not conceal. She was so imposing in her courageous resignation and the proud impassibility with which she met insolence and outrage, that she was never approached without a certain sense of embarrassment ; but Michonis, over the convivial cup, indulged himself in free remarks upon her appearance and surroundings. Her whitened hair, her terrible pallor, far from detracting from her beauty only enhanced it, and her gracious bearing he averred would in any case have rendered her fascinating.

De Rougeville, inwardly raging under the intolerable familiarity of such revelations, was careful to assume an air of indifference, and to appear simply led by the eloquence of the speaker into some slight curiosity concerning her. Finally a day was fixed when he should accompany Michonis on his tour of inspection.

And here comes the important discrepancy between history and



fiction, for from police reports it would seem that the Plot of the Pink was to have been carried out in the Conciergerie, whilst Dumas lays the scene in the Temple.

In the former case the difficulties would have been insurmountable. To escape from that "antechamber of death" could not have been attempted with the faintest chance of success, yet this is the story given amongst several equally improbable ones in the state papers. It is there related that Michonis confessed that he ushered De Rougeville on the day appointed into a low, dark, unfurnished chamber where two gendarmes were playing at cards; the woman Harel, who never for a moment lost sight of the Queen, was seated at the window sewing.

Marie Antoinette herself stood erect, and whilst Michonis had turned his head for a moment, the chevalier made her a sign, and, taking a red carnation from his buttonhole, threw it behind the stove near which the Queen was standing. As soon as they were gone, she picked it up and found a paper neatly folded in the petals, by which she was assured of the faithfulness of her friends, and informed that the chevalier would return with money to bribe her attendants, and full directions for her own conduct in the matter.

What then is said to have been the course pursued by Marie Antoinette?

It is related that she wrote a reply by means of a pin, and calling one of the guards, confessed to him the means by which De Rougeville had communicated with her, and desired him to place in his hands the few words she had written in reply before she left the prison.

The soldier, Gilbert by name, had always treated her with respect, and although so unusual a thing might have misled her to think him a friend, it is beyond measure unlikely that she would have trusted him in a matter of such importance both to herself and her friends. It appears that Gilbert took the paper and carried it at once to his superior officer, who brought the affair before the committee of public safety. Michonis was closely examined, but made very light of the affair as a mere act of gallantry on the part of a stranger who had no idea of interfering in politics.

The story told by Dumas is more interesting and easy of belief. It was in the spring of 1793. Paris, a vast beleaguered city, was in the hands of the people. Besides the organised National Guard, bands of disorderly patriots patrolled the streets, to the terror of peaceable inhabitants. No one would venture abroad after dark who was not a well-known Communist, at the risk of having to pass a night at the section, to be followed as likely as not by the guillotine.

One of these roystering parties had come to a halt in the middle of a narrow street and stopped a young woman who was hurrying on, carefully muffled and evidently anxious to escape observation.

She was roughly interrogated, and being unable to produce the card without which, by the latest decree of the Commune, no one



was permitted to move, they were about to convey her to the nearest post, when they were accosted by a young officer of the Municipal Guard. The woman, who was young and beautiful and evidently in the greatest terror and distress, was not long in obtaining his protection, although her appearance and manner could only be described by the popular word *suspect*; but being himself well known as an irreproachable Democrat he obtained her release, and found himself escorting her along the deserted streets in the direction she indicated.

Her gratitude to the handsome young Municipale may well be imagined, but she maintained a complete silence as to her name, and the nature of the business which called her abroad so late in such perilous times; and when they reached a quieter quarter she begged him to leave her.

It takes a good many of Dumas' dramatic scenes before Maurice Lindey succeeds in discovering the name and surroundings of the heroine of his adventure. She is the wife of a master tanner and dyer living on the outskirts of Paris, very quiet, homely people; Genevieve a model wife and citizeness, Dixmer, the husband, much occupied with his business, and not at all with politics, passing his days with his workmen, and his nights in his laboratory, assisted by a foreman—one Morand—a reserved and silent personage, always absorbed in some chemical problem, his eyes protected by large green spectacles, and his hands inordinately stained with pigments.

Maurice is soon made welcome to the quiet household. The oftener he appeared the better they seemed to be pleased, and he never for a moment suspected any ulterior motive in their excessive hospitality.

One day, at dinner, the conversation turned on passing events, which was not often the case, the Dixmers professing much ignorance of revolutionary matters; but a recent attempt to rescue the Temple prisoners could not fail to be mentioned.

"It only failed," said Morand, "because there was an aristocrat among the patrol who was imprudent enough to let the word *Monsieur* escape him."

Maurice, better informed, replied that greater vigilance had been aroused by the discovery of the Marquis de Rougeville's return to Paris, who had safely crossed through France with his usual good fortune, and having waited till dark at one of the barriers, made his way in, under the disguise of a National Guard.

Immense surprise was manifested at this news, and Dixmer supposed that he had vanished again as soon as the enterprise had failed.

"Not at all, not at all," said Maurice. "He is lurking somewhere about, but will be recognised before he can manage to get away."

"What is he like?" asked Morand.

"He is a small slight man, but soldier-like and distinguished—magnificent eyes, which are alone sufficient to identify him."

A profound silence followed this description.

"How can he be so rash as to remain!" presently exclaimed Madame Dixmer.

"You are a woman, citizeness," answered Maurice, "and will comprehend the all-powerful motive which in a man like the Chevalier outweighs all considerations of personal safety."

"And what may that be?"

"Love," said the young officer. "Have you never heard of his love for Marie Antoinette?"

Both Dixmer and Morand laughed derisively, and the conversation was turned into another channel.

A few days afterwards Genevieve asked Maurice if the Queen were really as beautiful as people said.

"Have you never seen her?" he inquired, with some surprise.

"I have not been long in Paris," she replied, "and the opportunity has never presented itself."

"Nor do I fancy would you take advantage of that which may soon unhappily occur."

"What do you mean?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Citizen Maurice alludes to the probable condemnation of Marie Antoinette and her death on the scaffold," said Morand, quietly.

"Ah, no," she murmured.

"But," continued Maurice, "I am on duty at the Temple, and could place you any day where you could see her during exercise hours in the gardens."

The offer was gratefully accepted, and on one fine morning Maurice appeared in full civic uniform to escort his friends to the Temple prison. Dixmer declared himself far too much occupied with his business for any such idle expedition, and Morand protested he could ill be spared, but was over-persuaded, and excusing himself for his working dress, prepared to make one of the little party.

The accustomed reader of romance already divines that the green spectacles were more than ever needful for complete disguise, that the pretended chemist was no other than the Chevalier de Maison Rouge, and that the Dixmers were both devoted Royalists.

Passing over the bridge of Notre Dame, they were nearing the Hôtel de Ville when they were accosted by a flower-girl.

"Buy a bouquet, *mon beau Municipale*," she said; "buy a bouquet for the pretty citizeness." She held up a bunch of splendid red carnations, and Maurice presented them to Madame Dixmer. Morand had stood apart during this apparently trifling episode. He was pale as death, but Maurice observed nothing.

Arrived at the Temple he installed them at the end of a narrow passage through which the Queen had to pass on her way to the gardens. At ten o'clock there was a call to arms, the clang of musketry upon the stones resounded through the courts, the iron gates opened, and the Royal family appeared.

"The first two are the sister and daughter of Capet," whispered Maurice. "The last to come is Marie Antoinette."

Morand, white as ashes, drew back against the wall, but Genevieve took a step forward. Her white dress and red carnations attracted the Queen's attention, and she said, smiling: "Ah, madame, how happy you are to have such flowers."

Genevieve made a rapid movement to offer them, but Maurice laid his hand on her arm.

"Is it forbidden?" she exclaimed, with deep disappointment. He thought for a moment and then said: "No; give them."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said the Queen, and with her thin white fingers she chose one of the flowers almost at random from the bouquet.

"Oh, take them, take them all," said Genevieve.

"*Allons, allons, Citoyenne Capet,*" shouted the officer of the guard, and she passed on.

"She never saw me," groaned Morand, who was almost kneeling.

"But you saw her, Madame Dixmer?" said Maurice, intent on pleasing her and blind to everything else.

"Oh, yes, yes," she replied; "and if I were to live a hundred years I should never forget it."

The same evening in her prison, by the aid of a smoking lamp, her little daughter's arms round her neck, hiding her movements from the eyes of her guards, Marie Antoinette deciphered a few lines written on tissue paper, which was tightly folded between the petals of one of the carnations. These told her that a passage had been opened underneath one of the garden walks leading into the street into which she could easily pass through a trap door in one of the canteens opened for the use of the soldiers, and into which she must find some excuse to enter unobserved.

There was nothing impossible in this, but the plot was discovered through one of the accidents which it was impossible to foresee.

The Queen had dropped one of the carnations, in which there was a duplicate of the paper in her own, and a flower-girl had been noticed on one of the bridges flinging a whole basket of her wares into the river. In those days it required much less to cause misgivings, and there are suspicions which are quickly justified. The trap-door was observed; the Temple gardens were considered a source of danger, and Marie Antoinette was parted from her sister and her children, and driven in the darkness of a summer night to her cell in the Conciergerie.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

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## THE PREBENDARY'S DAUGHTER.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD, AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

## I.



SUNNY country rectory. The windows of a small room open to a verdant lawn, where the autumn flowers were blooming in clusters, under the genial beams of the morning sun, and a well-spread breakfast-table, drawn to the windows and waiting for its guests, presented a pleasant picture of English comfort.

The first to enter the room was a fair girl of winning loveliness, the only child of the house, and the more precious, perhaps, that two sisters had died in childhood. She came dancing in, her blue eyes sparkling, and the curls of her light hair waving. Her features were of a charming delicacy rarely seen, and her complexion was fair and bright. It was Maria Remar.

Dr. Remar came next, carrying his shovel hat. A tall, pale man, with those abstracted looks that one is apt to fancy characteristic of an intellectual clergyman, and a nervous restlessness of the hands. There was a considerable likeness between him and his daughter, but in complexion he was darker, his hair being of a fine brown. Mrs. Remar followed, and they sat down to breakfast.

The conversation turned chiefly upon one point: the approaching departure of Dr. Remar's curate. A painstaking, hard-working man, who had held the office under the three preceding rectors (those cathedral livings often change hands), altogether for two-and-twenty years, and was now rewarded with a substantial benefice of £150 per annum. Dr. Remar was thinking how to replace him, and was running over in his head all the lower fry of clergy congregated in Closeford, the neighbouring cathedral town, when his man-servant entered with the letters.

Arnbrook Rectory and village were situated about seven miles from Closeford, and this morning post was from that place only: the London letters, when there were any, came some hours later in the day. Two letters and the county newspaper Andrew laid before his master. Dr. Remar put on his glasses—he was near-sighted by nature, not with age—and opened one of the letters.

The doctor caught a glimpse of its contents: he looked at the sides, he looked at the middle, he looked at the beginning, he looked

at the signature ; and then the doctor turned pale and red by turns, and finally looked at his daughter.

"Maria, here's an offer of marriage for you !"

If the doctor was perturbed, she was not ; and the amused, all-unconscious glance she raised to her father proved that her heart was as yet untouched.

"The epistle"—(cough)—"is from my friend"—(cough, cough)—"what's the matter with my throat ?" exclaimed the doctor ; but the truth was, he was agitated. "Give me some more tea, Elizabeth—from my friend, Dr. Gore."

Maria laughed out unrestrainedly.

"Why, papa ! I like Dr. Gore very well as a prebendary, as your friend ; but he is too old for me to marry ! He is older than you !"

"He's on the verge of fifty," observed the doctor. "Nevertheless, my dear, he makes you a very handsome offer, and proposes an ample settlement. And he is our sub-dean !"

"I wish people would leave Maria alone !" exclaimed Mrs. Remar, struggling between tears and peevishness. "This is the second officious offer she has had. She is our only child ; why should they want to take her away from us ?"

"Dear mamma," whispered Maria, drawing her mother's hand within hers, "be not afraid. I would rather be with you and papa than with all the sub-deans in the Church."

"What answer am I to make, Maria ?" asked Dr. Remar. "You had better read the letter."

"What you think best, papa : anything civil. But I could not like old Dr. Gore. The next time I see him, I fear I shall laugh in his face."

"You are too fond of laughing, Maria," rebuked the doctor. "You had better school yourself on that point, child."

Maria looked down, and compressed her lips, for she was on the verge of transgressing then. And the canon unsealed his other letter.

"Why, this is from the general post—oh, I see—re-directed on here from Closeford. Curacy vacant—title to orders—late father's friend—creditable examination ! Well, that's fortunate, and will save me the trouble of looking out, when I am just now so busy with my notes to the 'Divine Commentary.'"

"What are you talking about ?" asked Mrs. Remar.

"It's from my old tutor at Cambridge, inquiring if I can give or procure a title to orders for a pupil of his, the son of a deceased friend. A clever young man, he writes, and has passed a good examination. It will be the very thing ! He can come here for twelve months."

"Then you must change again at the end of that period ; a second trouble," urged Mrs. Remar.

"Not certain. He may suit my views, and remain on for good. Glad to do it, perhaps. I don't suppose he is a young fellow with any interest : an orphan, Wilson says."

"What is the name ?" asked Mrs. Remar,

"Name? I do not know whether the letter mentions the name. Oh, yes, 'Chase.' Arthur Chase. Well, I shall answer this communication at once," concluded Dr. Remar, gathering up his papers and rising from the breakfast-table.

"And the other one also, papa, if you please," said Maria.

"The other one?" cried Dr. Remar, who, like most spirits who live within themselves, was remarkably forgetful and abstracted. "Oh, true! I am sure I scarcely know what to say. I fear the sub-dean will think you unpardonably insensible to merit, Maria."

"I dare say he will, papa."

## II.

DR. REMAR held a prebend's stall in Closeford Cathedral; and, following prebendal custom, prepared in November to remove thither, with his family, for the audit season. Most prebendaries have a house contiguous to their cathedral, but Dr. Remar, with the exception of the month of November, during which the audit was held, and the four or five weeks he was in residence, generally made his home at Arnbrook Rectory.

All prebendaries are supposed to lie under an obligation to reside in the immediate vicinity of their cathedral during four or five weeks in each year. During this period they ought to attend prayers in the cathedral once each day (not taking any portion of the duty), and to preach the sermon on Sunday mornings—that is, four or five sermons in all, but this latter duty they may delegate to a minor canon. No very arduous task, reader. I think you and I would hold a stall in a cathedral if we could get it. And for which they receive—I don't like to say how much, for fear somebody should bring an action against me for libel.

Before Dr. Remar departed for Closeford, the new curate, Arthur Chase, arrived at the Rectory. The *Reverend* Arthur Chase he was now, for the Bishop of Closeford had obligingly put him through the necessary preliminaries. It was evening when he arrived. He had taken the half-past five o'clock coach from Closeford, and was set down about half-past six at the rectory-gate. Dr. and Mrs. Remar had strolled out after their dinner, but Maria was in the garden, and saw him get off the coach. The young clergyman came up to her, and introduced himself.

What most struck Maria was the remarkable contrast he presented to their late curate. The Reverend Joseph Hall was a meek, retiring man of six or seven-and-forty years, very humble, very silent, especially when in the presence of his rector's family, and in person very plain. Maria never remembered him to have voluntarily addressed her but once, and then he had called her "Miss." But look at the one now before her! A tall, elegant man, of great personal attractions, whose



bearing and manners were high-bred and refined, who conversed with her in a tone of the most perfect equality, who made himself, at once, the easy, agreeable companion, who was evidently quite as much at home in good society as she was, and who—in short, to sum the matter up, who won her good will, off-hand.

Not only Maria's. The doctor and Mrs. Remar, the parishioners, the farmer and his family whose house was to be his home, for he had taken possession of the lodgings of the late curate, all were wonderfully taken with the young minister. And when Sunday came and he read himself in, in a clear, low, earnest voice, and preached a sermon, which, whether it was his own or not, was of persuasive eloquence, the opulent farmers openly congratulated the rector on his choice, and the latter imparted his satisfaction to his wife and daughter. But in this general congratulation none remembered that a persuasive voice and eloquent tongue may belong to a bad man as well as a good one—minister of the Gospel though he be.

"I shall ask him to come up and dine with us, after the second service," said the rector to his wife, in the plenitude of his satisfaction.

Perhaps the rector had better have let it alone. Though how did he foresee, at that early stage, that the less Mr. Chase and Maria saw of each other, the better. He could not look into their hearts, and read the favourable impression which had been mutually made.

Not until next Saturday did Dr. Remar and his family leave for Closeford. But in that seven days Maria had been more in the society of the new curate than she had been in that of the old one in all her life. Not a day but he had spent part of it at the rectory, scarcely a day but he joined Mrs. Remar and Maria in their walks, the doctor being buried as usual in his study, up to his eyes in ink and manuscripts. Now he was chattering to them whilst they worked, all sorts of pleasant anecdotes, tales of his college-life—of course he was careful what he said here—reminiscences of his early home, another country-rectory, and of his lost, but-never-to-be-forgotten mother; unreserved accounts of his uncle, and his fine property, and all he had done for him, for Mr. Chase made no secret that his own had been a thoughtless career, speaking of it in terms of contrition. Now he would tie up flowers, and pluck the dying leaves off Mrs. Remar's plants; now he would come, laughing, up to the rectory, with a great quart stone bottle, from good Dame Giles, for some more "stuff for her rheumatiz," as the late curate had been wont to do, only that *he*, in his shy modesty, would seek the supply from the housekeeper, not from Mrs. Remar: now he would stroll forth in the sunny afternoon with Mrs. Remar and Maria, to see and be introduced to some other house-confined dame; and in the evening he would be there making the tea-table pleasant, and arousing the studious, abstracted rector to cheerfulness. Altogether, when, on the Saturday, Maria sat in the carriage on her way to Closeford, she may be pardoned for letting her thoughts run wild on the new and attractive



companion they were leaving behind. They were to return to the rectory for Christmas, to remain; and Maria already wished the time had come.

## III.

It came: and it went. The clear, frosty month of January, the warmer but less fine February came in, each in its turn, and March arrived all blustering, but giving fair promise of a lovely spring. How fared it by this time at Arnbrook Rectory? Reader, you have little need to ask. How is it likely to fare when two young, and as yet unoccupied hearts are thrown into daily contact? From the very first hour of their meeting, that twilight evening when she had seen him get off the coach at the rectory-gate, the ill-fated young lady's interest had been strongly excited towards Mr. Chase; and now that for some months they had been brought into companionship, he ever by her side in the plenitude of his manifold attractions, that interest had deepened into love. Not the every-day sentiment which is usually designated by the name, but the deep, all-absorbing passion that sets its stamp upon all the future life. The elements of powerful passion were in Maria Remar's nature, and though they had hitherto lain in repose, subdued to calmness by education and religion, they arose not the less potent now that their chords were touched,

And the Reverend Arthur Chase? Dissipated as his college-life had been, reckless as its course, heedless as he had remained as to who suffered so that he obtained the gratification of the hour, whatever its nature might be, will it be believed that a chaste, pure love had now for the first time taken possession of his heart? Yet it had. He looked on Maria Remar, and prayed that he might become worthy of her. He glanced back at his former follies with loathing and repentance; he sincerely hoped from henceforth to lead a good life: was it that the "religion" had "come" with his ordination, as he had once suggested to his uncle? I don't know: but certain it is that he had now become aware of the deep responsibility he had then assumed in the sight of God. No man could more earnestly hope and desire to fulfil his duties for the future. To be a faithful and sincere Christian minister, and to some time call Maria Remar his wife, were now the aspirations of Arthur Chase. No plain declaration of love had passed from Mr. Chase to Maria, yet the dear feelings of each were betrayed in a thousand ways, quite as certainly as words could speak them. But, Heaven bless Mr. Chase's innocence! wide-awake as he was in the ways of the world, he little knew the nice distinctions of a cathedral town, or he never could have admitted a hope that anything so obscure as a curate without definite prospects—and very definite ones, too!—might dare to aspire to the daughter of Canon Remar.

A few weeks more, it was in April, and Dr. and Mrs. Remar's optics were rent open. It may be a wonder to most people that they had remained shut so long: but, that one in the position of Mr. Chase could presume to think of Maria, never entered into the exclusive ideas of Dr. and Mrs. Remar. To them he was but the lowly curate; a clergyman, it is true, but one cast in quite another sphere; the successor to the shy, humble drudge, who would have been as likely to raise his eyes to royalty for a wife as to the offshoot of a prebendary. If you think these distinctions were not held and recognised amongst certain of the clergy, at the time of which I am writing, you are extremely inexperienced in what regarded them, and I am now telling you no tale of fiction.

The way in which it came out was very shocking: everybody said so. The doctor had an attack of something—he said gout, and his wife said rheumatism—but, whatever it was, it caused him to keep his bedroom, and diet himself, for he was a nervous man in illness. One evening Mrs. Remar, who had been sitting with him, came creeping down to the breakfast-room for her knitting, which she only worked at by twilight. She had on list shoes, not to disturb the invalid, who could not bear the least noise when he thought himself ill, and, pushing open the room door, quietly entered. Horror of horrors! there stood Mr. Chase and Maria just outside the window; his arm was round her waist, his hand clasped hers, and he was whispering persuasively to her in the fading light, their attitude being unmistakably that of lovers. Of course it was very dreadful—we all know it, that is, if we are elderly—and Mrs. Remar stood transfixed: had she witnessed a bear's paw round her daughter's waist, she would not have been quite so much shocked. She uttered an involuntary exclamation, which caused Mr. Chase to start and release Maria; and the red blood rushed over his handsome face.

He could do nothing else than speak out; which he did at once; all his love; all his hopes; how tenderly he was attached to Maria, how fervently he trusted some day to make her his wife. Mrs. Remar would have preferred, of the two, to hear he was attached to *her*. She was too angry, too dismayed, to reply. Of impassable general temperament, she was capable, like Maria, of being aroused to great excitement, and she flew upstairs to Dr. Remar.

The doctor, for some time, could not make out what was the disturbance, for with her frantic lamentations and hysterical sobs, his wife was partly unintelligible. But when he did comprehend the matter, he tumbled out of bed with as little ceremony as any doctor of divinity ever tumbled out yet, and, forgetting his gout and his rheumatism, thrust a portion of his clothes over his night attire, and sent his wife to order up Mr. Chase.

When the young clergyman entered, all agitated though he was, the appearance of his rector struck him as being somewhat ludicrous. The doctor had been startled out of a doze, that light sleep which is

apt to steal over invalids as the daylight fades, and he looked but half awake ; his face paler even than usual, and his long hair standing on end, just as if he had been drawn through a hedge. Dr. Remar has been accused of affectation in thus wearing his hair longer than is customary, but those who were prone to say so knew little of him : carelessness, inattention to personal appearance, had to do with the habit, not affectation. He was struggling into a waistcoat when Mr. Chase entered, and down he sat in his night-shirt sleeves.

In vain Mr. Chase offered explanations. Dr. Remar could not understand them : he really *could* not. His mind refused to take in the fact that it was within the range of possibility for an unknown deacon to fall in love with a Miss Remar.

"Are you in the full possession of your senses, sir?" he demanded at length, after listening to what Arthur had to say.

"Why yes, sir, I hope so," deprecated Mr. Chase.

"It seems to me not," retorted the rector ; "or else that you are forgetting all ideas of social decency, a more reprehensible crime than the other. Do you know that the young lady whom you would lower by your pretensions is MY daughter, and that I am Prebendary Remar?"

"I am of good family, sir, as you are aware," suggested the young clergyman. "And though it would appear unseemly for me to aspire to Miss Remar under my present circumstances, I hope I am not going to remain a curate all my life."

"Have the goodness to confine yourself to facts, not hopes," coldly interposed Dr. Remar. "You are obscure, sir—excuse me, I don't enter into what you advance about family—as a clergyman, you are obscure, and likely to remain so. I was a curate myself once ; we must all be curates ; but our promotion was assured before we entered the Church."—Dr. Remar's thoughts were probably reverting to his brethren of the stalls, as he spoke collectively. "We had interest to push us on : you have none. Sir, it is a positive insult to our order for *you* to cast a thought towards Miss Remar."

"Dr. Remar!" exclaimed Arthur, much agitated, "you look but on the worst side of things. I am not without friends : my uncle, from his wealth and position, must possess some interest, and he will no doubt use it for me. I may not long remain as I am now. Should circumstances change with me, should I be fortunate enough to obtain a good rank in the Church, may I then hope to renew my addresses to your daughter?"

"Never, sir! never! the question is absurd. If you ever do gain position, it may not be for years : long after my daughter will have wedded in her own sphere. But did you attain it to-morrow, an insuperable bar would still exist : you have no private fortune to settle on a wife."

"Dr. Remar, let me beseech you——"

"Sir, no more ; our interview is at an end," interrupted the doctor,

imperatively, as he waved him from the room. "Confine your thoughts in future to their proper orbit, and never presume to let them wander to things above it. Upon reflecting over your conduct, I think you will find cause for shame at having abused the friendship and hospitality I incautiously accorded to you. Leave my house instantly, and henceforth bear in mind that our relations with each other will be confined to those of rector and curate.

As Mr. Chase descended the stairs he came upon Maria. She was lingering in the recess leading to the breakfast-room door, the rays of the hall lamp falling aslant her dress. Terrified, sick and shivering, she had been dreading the termination of the interview. He pushed open the room door, drew her in, and clasped her to his heart.

"Oh, Arthur! What hope is there?"

"None, Maria, for the present," he answered; and he put aside her clustering curls, and held her pale cheek against his. "Your father is bitterly against it: it is useless for me to conceal it, for you had better learn the truth from me, my darling, than from him. In honour, Maria, I ought not to be with you; and we may not again meet."

A low, wailing cry of pain burst from her.

"I may not fetter you by vows, Maria," he resumed: "I dare not, in honour, speak to you of hope for the future. Yet, in my own heart, hope is strong; it whispers that our separation will not be for always, though we must part for a time. God bless you and keep you, my dearest, until that time shall come! And should it never come——"

He stopped in agitation: he could not speak calmly of that probability. The tears were streaming from Maria's eyes, and she clung to him in the bitter overwhelming of despair. But Mr. Chase knew that he was transgressing, in thus prolonging their interview: honour was alive within him now, however dead it might once have been, and with a brief, fervent embrace, a passionate straining of her to his beating heart, he turned to the hall door and passed out of it. Maria clasped her hands together, watching, through the glass doors, the last of that form which had become so necessary to her existence. But at that moment she heard her father's voice calling harshly to her. "It will kill me!" she murmured, as she turned to obey.

A good thing if it had killed her.

#### IV.

THE months went on to the autumn. At the window of her dressing-room, in the prebendal residence at Closeford, which window, by way of prospect, had the cathedral walls, and some restless rooks that were always flying about and cawing, sat Maria Remar, her weakened

frame propped up with pillows, and the hectic of some disorder that looked very like consumption deepening her cheek and glistening in her eye.

The events of the previous April had been too much for her. The forced separation from Arthur Chase had impaired her health and strength. Dr. and Mrs. Remar had pointed out to her the impossibility of her ever seeing him more, and to guard against that event happening accidentally, she was at once removed to Closeford. She bowed to the will of her parents: she was by far too dutiful a child, had been too correctly brought up, to attempt to see or hear from Mr. Chase clandestinely; but the incessant struggle going on within her, the aching misery that filled her heart, the silence in which she buried her inward life, told upon her bodily health. No particular disease fell over her; nothing except debility; but when the weeks and months wore on, and she grew worse, day by day, the frame weaker, the cheek brighter, and the face and hands more attenuated, then people said that Maria Remar was dying. Oh, it was a fearful time for Dr. Remar! To sacrifice his cherished pride and suffer his daughter to descend in the scale of "society," and become one with that poor, obscure curate, or to see her die before his eyes! He had to choose one of the two alternatives. But the prejudices of a prebendary, at least, such a one as Dr. Remar, when were they overcome? *His* were not; for they formed part and parcel of himself. It was asserted, in the precincts, that Mrs. Remar went down upon her knees to her husband, beseeching him to relent and to save their child. But this may not have been true. It is certain that Mrs. Remar was overwhelmed with grief, grief so excessive that it could not be restrained before her friends and visitors, though she only spoke to them of Maria's illness, never of its cause, or hinting at Mr. Chase. But there was no relenting on the canon's part, for his curate remained unsummoned and unnoticed at Arnbrook, and Maria grew daily nearer to the grave. It may be, that Dr. Remar did not take this sombre view of her case, that he thought time would suffice to restore her to health, or that some miracle would be wrought upon her.

One day, about eleven o'clock, Dr. Remar, with his usual abstracted air and restless step, was leaving the cathedral after morning prayers, when, as he emerged from the cloisters, his servant, old Andrew, stepped up to him.

"A gentleman has been waiting to see you, almost ever since ten o'clock, sir," he observed. "Mr. Chase."

"*Who?*" cried Dr. Remar, arousing himself.

"Mr. Chase, from Arnbrook," repeated Andrew. "He is in the study sir."

"The insolence—the presuming insolence of the fellow to intrude into my very house!" muttered Dr. Remar, striding on briskly. "It is well for him his twelvemonth is nearly up."

He went in with the sternest possible expression of face, and his brown hair straggling about more than ever: it somehow had a knack of doing so, if anything put him out. But his visitor came forward to greet him with a bright smile and beaming glance.

"Insolent!" muttered the canon again. "To what am I indebted for this unexpected visit?" he haughtily inquired, vouchsafing no previous courtesy of words, and standing bolt upright near the door.

"I have come to ask for a few days' leave of absence, sir," replied the curate. "Yesterday afternoon's post brought me some most unexpected news. My poor cousin, Durham Chase, has met with an accidental death, boating at Oxford; and my uncle has summoned me to his presence without delay."

"Without reference to my convenience, I suppose," observed the stately prebendary.

"Under the circumstances, Dr. Remar, I hope you will accord it to me. There may be business to be gone through—I don't know. I am the heir, now."

"What?" cried Dr. Remar, a little more briskly.

"The heir to the family estates and to Durham Park. My uncle has no other child living. God knows I sincerely grieve for my poor cousin; but—but in the midst of it, Dr. Remar, there is a thought that will intrude—that——"

"That what, sir?" interrupted the doctor, putting a sudden stop to his curate's hesitation.

"It does not become me to speak of these matters with my cousin yet unburied, but—may I not hope," he continued, still a little hesitatingly, and his fair features flushing, "that, with this wonderful change in my prospects, I may be allowed, on my return, to see Miss Remar? I hear, sir, she is fearfully ill."

"Miss Remar is not in robust health," replied the doctor. "But—to bring our present interview to a close—I will accord you the leave of absence you require, in consideration of the melancholy circumstances under which it is demanded. Pray present my compliments and condolences to Mr. Chase."

That last sentence was quite sufficient—at least Arthur thought it so—to give promise that the heir to the broad lands of Durham, even though he did aspire to the hand of Miss Remar, would be received on a very different footing from what the poor curate had been.

And so it proved. On Arthur's return, he made his proposals in due form, backed by the offer of a handsome settlement, and was admitted to an interview with Maria.

Only just before it took place, on that same morning, had she learnt from her mother the change in her prospects. She was painfully agitated when he entered, and he scarcely less so at witnessing the fearful change that a few months' mental disease had wrought. No words, at the moment, passed between them, but as the door



closed behind Mr. Chase and he advanced towards her, Maria rose into a standing posture, and staggering a few steps forward, fainted as he caught her.

## V.

Now it is to be hoped that the diligent reader made himself acquainted with the paper which preceded this, otherwise he may be at a fault to understand these concluding pages, for we must now go back to Lavinia Glynn.

She was staying, when we last saw her, at that quiet little sea-coast town in Sussex. Not many weeks after the departure of him, whom *she* only knew by the name of Durham, Mr. and Mrs. Glynn, fidgety as ever, discovered that the sea-side did not agree with them any more than Norfolk had done, and they removed from it, and took up their final abode in London. But what a life was Lavinia's! her whole thoughts, wild and unsubdued as they had always been, were centred upon him whom she had set up in her heart to worship. As the months dragged their slow length along, and he never came or sent her word or token, the anguish of her reflections deepened into despair, but such despair that the calm mind can form no idea of. Night and day, night and day, she had no rest, or if she did, of sheer nature's weariness, sink into a troubled sleep, her dreams but renewed her waking misery, by portraying the form of Mr. Durham.

It certainly cannot be necessary to explain here that Arthur Durham and Arthur Chase were one and the same person, for that the reader has long ago divined; but it may be essential to add a fact of which he as yet knows nothing, namely, that Mrs. Remar was the sister of Mr. Glynn. Very little intercourse had been kept up between the families, living, as they did, widely apart; but when so important an event as the marriage of Maria drew on, the doctor and Mrs. Remar thought it right to recognise more closely the relationship, and they forwarded, quite at the eleventh hour, an invitation to the Glynn's to visit Arnbrook for the ceremony.

How can we describe the change which had taken place in Maria? Reader, you have shivered through the dark, tempestuous night, on which no ray of light has gleamed to relieve the howling wind, the terrific storm, and watched it give place to the joy of morning, to the rising sun, the opening flowers, the dewy grass, the sweet carolling of the birds, and you have marvelled at the change. Even so was that wrought in Maria Remar.

The winter months had been spent by her in a trance of happiness, for they were again at Arnbrook Rectory, and Mr. Chase, who retained his curacy, was at her side. Her sweet face was now radiant with hope, and sure never did a union appear to advance under more genial auspices than that of hers with Arthur Chase. The marriage

was to take place in April, and after a temporary absence they were to return and take possession of the Rectory House, Dr. and Mrs. Remar making their future home at Closeford. There was no necessity now, in relation to pecuniary matters, for Mr. Chase to remain in the Church, for his fortune would be abundant, but he preferred to do so. The laudable, it may be said serious, sentiments which had latterly grown up in his heart, were not lessened by his accession to wealth.

"Glynn? Glynn?" he exclaimed, the name of these new relations, new to him, grating on his ear; "of what county are they?"

"No particular county that I know of," replied Maria. "They reside in London."

"London, do they," he rejoined, with a sigh of relief.

"Why?" asked Maria. "Did you recognise the name?"

"Yes. A—college friend—of mine was named Glynn." You may well blush, Reverend Arthur, and draw that girl's fair face to yours, for it is a blush that you don't care she should penetrate. But it wants scarce a week now to the wedding, and they have other things than names to talk about. Especially as Mr. Chase was going away that evening for several days.

"We will not go," decided Lavinia, upon the arrival of the invitation. "What are the Remars to us? Or this curate?" The old habit, you see, reader, of consulting her own imperious will: and Mr. and Mrs. Glynn acceded passively. They had never yet done otherwise. But the servant, Dobson, the former dangerous confidant, was Lavinia's confidant still, and she urged her young mistress to reverse her determination.

"Mr. Durham," argued Dobson, and the colour rushed violently to Lavinia's face, as it always did at the mention of that name, "never comes to seek you, he never means to: and, were he so inclined, he has no clue to where we are living."

Lavinia listened impatiently.

"It seems to me, then, that if you care to find him you must go out into the world. You may drop upon him in some odd corner of it. And if not, any change for you, Miss Lavinia, must be beneficial; rather than you should continue in this dead-alive state, without hope, without energy, your very life buried in the past!"

"Then let us go!" exclaimed Lavinia, one of the ideas suggested serving to arouse her from her apathy. It is probable, however, that the servant had only spoken interestedly: *she* may have had no objection to vary the monotony of her life by a country excursion. "Get over the preparations as quickly as you can, Dobson," continued Lavinia; "we will go into Closefordshire." And Mr. and Mrs. Glynn once more bowed to her redecession.

It wanted but three days to the marriage when the family arrived at Ambrook Rectory.

"How thin and pale you are!" exclaimed Maria to her cousin,

when they were growing sociable. "I had always pictured you as being so different—the very image of health. You must have altered of late years."

"Perhaps I have," returned Lavinia, crimsoning violently; "I don't know. But tell me of your future husband, Maria. Is he handsome? What is his name?"

"Arthur," replied Miss Remar, passing by the first question.

"Arthur?" almost screamed Lavinia.

"What is the matter?" said Maria. "Do you not like the name?"

"*Do I not like it!*" murmured Lavinia to herself, her eyes filling with tears: "what other name can to me bring its charm with it?"

The day preceding the wedding arrived, and Mr. Chase had not returned, but he was expected by the evening coach from Closeford. An afternoon stage brought certain paraphernalia connected with the approaching ceremony; to wit, the wreath that Maria was to wear, and the bonnet for Mrs. Remar. The young ladies eagerly took up the wreath; when it was discovered that by some strange oversight (the wrong wreath probably forwarded) orange blossoms had been omitted in its construction.

"There is no time to send it back," observed Mrs. Remar; "we must go to the milliner's in the village and get a few sprays from her to mix with the wreath. She told me to-day she had some fresh ones."

"Poor thing!" exclaimed Maria. "I daresay she ordered them on purpose, hoping we might want some. Buy them all, mamma."

Accordingly, when dinner was over, the two elder ladies took their way to the village after these orange-blossoms, leaving Dr. Remar and Mr. Glynn at the desert-table, and Lavinia and Maria in the drawing-room. Maria took the wreath out of the box, and began pulling out a spray here and there to make room for the additional ones she would have to put in.

Just at this time Dobson was in the kitchen gossiping with the cook, when the evening stage from Closeford, the very one which had first brought Arthur Chase to the house, drew up to the rectory-gate. Eliza started from her seat and rushed to the window.

"Is not that Mr Durham?" she exclaimed.

The cook ranged her eyes round the landscape, and ranged them again before she answered. "I don't see nobody but Mr. Chase."

"There! that gentleman coming up to the house. He is leaving the path and crossing the lawn. It is surely Mr. Durham."

"That is Mr. Chase, I tell you," cried the cook. "He is going in through the breakfast-room windows: he often does."

"What does he want here?" demanded Dobson.

"Want here!" retorted the cook: "why, that's Miss Maria's bridegroom."

"Heaven be good to me!" exclaimed Dobson startingly, "you don't mean to tell me it is *that* man who is to marry Miss Remar?"

Without waiting for any answer, she ran swiftly from the apartment, the cook looking after her in amazement, and remarking that the girl must be "gone crazy" in the head.

Dobson came up with Mr. Chase as he entered the breakfast-room by the window, the pleasant apartment which the reader was first introduced to at Arnbrook Rectory. The room had two doors to it, one leading to the hall, the other opening to the dining-room. This latter door was ajar, and Dr. Remar and Mr. Glynn, who were within, could hear every word that passed. Dobson had run so quickly that her breath was gone, and, without speaking, she seized Mr. Chase by the arm.

"Ah—what—*you*, Dobson!" he ejaculated, his equanimity slightly shaken. "What brings you here?"

"My better angel, I trust," replied the girl, who, whatever her faults, was attached to Lavinia Glynn. "I should rather ask what brings you here, Mr. Durham, when you ought long ago to have been with Miss Lavinia."

"My good woman, don't talk so loud. All that is past and gone."

"Past and gone for you, sir, but not for her. You know well that you gained her whole love and solemnly vowed to marry her."

"The truth is I was wild and young and careless, and I did talk nonsense to Miss Glynn. I am sorry, and, were the time to come over again, I would not do so; but it can't be helped now. Loose my arm, Dobson."

"Not till you promise to make her reparation. Talked nonsense, indeed!"

"I know of none that I can make," answered Mr. Chase, essaying to free his arm, without violence, from Dobson. But the woman's grasp was strong and determined.

"There is only one way, sir—marriage; keep to your promise and marry her. You can do that."

"Don't talk nonsense!" he exclaimed angrily. "Release your hold, Dobson, or you will compel me to use force."

"They say you are about to marry her cousin, Miss Remar."

"Her cousin!" he cried, aghast.

"Yes; her own cousin. And now, sir, if you persist in that, I swear I will stop the marriage. You must marry Miss Lavinia, and no one else."

"Absurd!" he uttered haughtily, his temper rising, as he wrenched his arm from her. "Lavinia Glynn is no fitting wife for me."

Dobson was silent, perhaps Mr. Chase thought *silenced*, and he left a bank-note in her hand as he turned from the room. However potent its influence might have been at ordinary times, Dobson flung it to the floor now. Had she been aware of its value, she might have treated it with less disdain.

Mr. Chase went upstairs and entered the drawing-room, and following, walked Mrs. Remar and Mrs. Glynn, who had just returned

In the obscurity of the fading day, he did not recognise Lavinia Glynn, but advanced to Maria, and stole a greeting.

But Lavinia knew *him*, and all sense of outward objects, saving himself, seemed to leave her. A mist rose before her eyes, the room swam round, consciousness of those in it faded from her remembrance, and she fell at his feet with a cry of pain, and clasped his knees in her wild, ungovernable impetuosity.

"Oh, Arthur! my love! my promised husband! I thought you would never come! How could you desert me and leave me to these years of dreadful despair?"

"What mistake is this?" broke from the dismayed lips of Mrs. Remar. "Is not this gentleman a stranger to you, Lavinia?"

"Arthur, dearest, speak to them!" she implored; "tell them we are no strangers. Would we had been!"

What Mr. Chase was about to stammer forth in explanation he alone can tell; but Mr. Glynn now entered the room and strode forward, his voice raised in passion.

"Mr. Chase—if that be your name—may I inquire if the conversation you have just held with a person in the breakfast-room had reference to this young lady, Miss Glynn?"

"He knows it had," cried Dobson, advancing from behind and giving vent to her anger. "Deny it if you dare, Mr. Durham!"

"I met with this young lady two years ago, and—a—few nonsensical love-passages passed between us, nothing more," stammered the young clergyman from between his livid lips. He, perhaps, was as anxious to save her reputation as to exculpate himself.

"Liar!" uttered Dobson, confronting him. "May I never stir from this spot," she vehemently added, addressing those around, "if he did not win her love and confidence and promise to marry her by all the most sacred vows in the sight of heaven; and she believed him, and has just been breaking her heart for him ever since. But he was not Mr. Chase; he called himself Durham then!"

There was a dead silence. Lavinia had buried her head at the feet of Mr. Chase, and he looked ready to go into the next world, he was so agitated and ghastly. Dr. Remar spoke up.

"Sir," he said, pointing to Lavinia, "are you prepared to marry this young lady?"

"My sins are being heavily visited upon me," murmured the unhappy young man. "I——"

"No subterfuge, sir," thundered forth the rector. "I demand a plain answer."

"I cannot marry her," he replied, turning from the fallen girl with a shudder. "I can marry none save her who was about to become my dear wife."

"And that you shall never do!" said Prebendary Remar.

Some one thought then of looking round for Maria. She was standing behind, *laughing*, though the laugh seemed fixed and rigid,

the wreath clenched in her closed hand ; and there was a stony aspect in her face, a glassiness in her eyes, which startled them all.

Her mother hastened to her and spoke ; but she did not seem to hear or to know any one. Mr. Chase essayed to arouse her, and under the circumstances, in their terrible fear for her reason, they suffered him to approach her, ere he made his exit from the house ; but she was equally insensible to him as to the rest. They removed her to bed, and sent for half the physicians of Closeford ; but as the days went on, though her features resumed their ordinary aspect, it was found that her intellect was irrecoverably gone.

Not at first was she removed to an asylum, but it was at length thought that the care, the rational treatment pursued in those receptacles, might eventually prove of benefit ; and she was placed where the reader first saw her. She was never violent, and, save upon that one subject, could scarcely be said to be insane, but the delusion that she was about to be married did not leave her, and in the coldest day in winter they dared not dress her in anything but white : whenever they attempted it, her distress was painful to witness and difficult to soothe. Her only occupation was that of weaving wreaths ; and she could not be won to any other. It would seem that some chord of memory, unexplainable to us, was touched, connecting her imagination with that fatal night, and the wreath she held. In summer they provided her with fresh garden flowers, in winter with artificial ones, and she wove them into garlands. When they were finished and laid aside, an attendant, unseen by her, cut the string, and scattered the flowers into the basket, ready for the ill-fated girl to use again. One of her delusions was, that her father and mother were keeping her lover from her, and after each interview with them her silent sobs and tears were excessive, lasting for hours. This caused the medical men to forbid their visiting her, save at rare intervals. A painful prohibition for Dr. Remar : no wonder, all things considered, that his hair turned white. Mrs. Remar soon passed to a world where sorrow and suffering cannot enter.

I can tell you nothing of Lavinia Glynn—nothing good. It was said that her parents' hearts, so idolatrously bound up in her, were broken. She left their house and entered upon a reckless career, and people "talked" much of her, but she never again saw Mr. Chase after that dread, explanatory hour.

And what became of him—Arthur Chase ? Truly, as he said, his sins were visited heavily upon him. Many curious versions of the affair came out to the world, in most of which the young clergyman was represented as a sinful fiend—a second Satan. Opinions were divided as to whether his gown would be taken from him, some holding that it would. Others ridiculed the idea. "If every clergyman," they reasoned, "were to lose his gown for peccadilloes committed before he wore it, the bishops would have enough to do"—which nobody can deny. Mr. Chase, however, settled the



matter himself, by quietly resigning it, and was the Reverend Arthur Chase no more. He left Closefordshire, and, after his uncle's death, resided at Durham Park, leading so quiet a life, that the neighbours said he would relapse into what his uncle was before him—a misanthrope. But he carried on great improvements on his estate, and no one ever applied to him for assistance in vain. In a neighbouring town, populous, and not famed for its morality, his stealthy deeds of charity were well known. The erection of a large, well-appointed building in it was one of his earliest acts: it is a reformatory asylum for the outcasts of society. An imposing door, with pillars, forms its chief entrance, and over this door, in small letters that do not readily catch the eye, is engraved a verse from the Holy Scriptures:

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: *but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*”

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## ENGLISH RISPETTI.

### THE DAISY.

#### I.

Day's-eye! how childlike sweet the name and pure—  
 Flower of the heart of England, with no peer!  
 Great Chaucer loved thee in thy look demure,  
 And Burns, for thou art constant through the year.  
 Thou diest not as dies the glowing rose,  
 But meekly lift'st thy head among the snows;  
 And when the sun goes down, thou closest eye,  
 And ope'st again when dawn is drawing nigh.

#### II.

Nay, when the clouds hang, lowering, o'er the earth  
 To darken life, it is as night with thee;  
 Thou wastest not thy sweetness nor thy mirth,  
 But waitest for the light to set thee free.  
 Oh! fair economist, fain would I learn  
 The secret of thy life, and seek to earn  
 The rest that comes with dark, stillness from strife,  
 Calm waiting always on the light of life.

A. H. JAPP, LL.D.

## THE VALLEY OF THE RHONE.

By CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM MAJORCA," "MEMORIALS OF MRS. HENRY WOOD," ETC., ETC.



WE left the Dominican monk who was a wanderer over the earth, and the monastery monk who never moved from his post, gazing after our retreating chariot. The faithful St. Bernard, not the least interesting of the trio, had uttered his protest. As we turned out of sight his bark still rang in our ears. The next to depart would be the Dominican, and we pictured him setting out on his solitary walk through the snow-capped hills and valleys on

his way to Aosta and to Rome. Would the St. Bernard again utter his protest, or was that reserved only for ourselves?

It is impossible to say that we left the cold and comfortless monastery with great regret. Its romance lies in its wonderful situation amidst the high Alpine hills; in the object for which it exists: the rescue and shelter of weather-bound, benighted, snow-lost travellers; in the little colony of monks who devote their lives to good deeds; in the sagacity, faithfulness and almost human comprehension of that race of dogs that, like the pigeons of St. Mark's, deserve special protection.

We took our last look of the monastery as we turned the sharp angle of the road. Above it stood the small, grey, melancholy morgue; and we almost shuddered as the wide grating caught our eye and we remembered how that morning we had looked through it upon a ghastly vision. To the monk the sight was a matter of indifference. Familiarity breeds contempt, and they who daily face the possibilities of death have no shrinking from its visible presentment. He had taken us up to the strange tomb-building with the air of one who might be exhibiting a picture-gallery. He had grown as indifferent to this *memento mori* as the monks of La Trappe when they repeat the formula on meeting each other in the passages

of their gloomy convent. We left it all behind us. Every inch of the journey seemed to bring us nearer to the world of life and movement.

Our driver might well say "The downhill path is easy," a condition the strong little horse quite appreciated. The day was not less brilliant than yesterday. We were surrounded by light, and very soon by warmth. The snow upon the hills sparkled and glistened like diamonds. The atmosphere was absolutely radiant. In these latitudes it is ethereal, rarefied, intoxicating. A delightful buoyancy takes possession of one's spirits; imagination is vividly excited.

At the Cantine history repeated itself. The girl once more came forward with the St. Bernard puppy in her arms, and had evidently constituted itself its head nurse. The puppy recognised us at once. This time there was reproach, not pleading, in his eyes. His bark was querulous, condemning.

"I pleaded with you yesterday," it said, "and pleaded in vain. It takes two to make a bargain, and I did not consent to being sold to that very commonplace individual of Martigny for 200 francs. Take advantage of this legal flaw; pay for me and take me with you. Then I shall be a truly happy dog."

Tears in the eyes and waggings of the tail emphasised the pleadings.

"Is it quite impossible to buy him?" we said to the girl. "You see how anxious he is—ought you not to consult his inclination a little in disposing of him? We will give you 250 francs."

The puppy pricked up his beautiful ears, opened his mouth, breathed quickly; his eyes glistened. This bribe would surely settle the matter? But the girl was firm to her "first intentions."

"It is impossible, monsieur. If we were to do such a thing we should lose our credit. No one would buy any more dogs from us. We could not take 500 francs if you offered them. It would not pay us to do so. And this is our very last dog of the season. No chance of another before next year."

So Bruno the puppy (his name was also Bruno) subsided into a state of melancholy collapse. His mouth closed, his ears went down and his eyelids drooped; we thought he was about to expire.

"It is one of his tricks," said the girl; "he is only shamming. It is his way when he can't get his own will."

"Hard-hearted, miserable tyrant," cried Bruno, with a sudden bark. "I will have my revenge yet. I will take the distemper out of pure spite and die. Life for me has no longer any charm. Then you will lose your 200 francs. Revenge is sweet."

He was but a dog after all, and must be forgiven this uncharitable sentiment. Who knows if we should not do as much under a like provocation? With almost tears in our own eyes, we bade him goodbye. He gave us a very cold, limp paw to shake, and his head went down in a very lifeless manner on to the girl's arm as we turned away.

But the day was too beautiful, the air too radiant, the sunshine and blue skies too glorious to indulge in melancholy. We passed one after another all the spots on the road with which yesterday had made us familiar. This experience of descending was almost finer than we had thought that of ascending. The mountains seemed to wrap and revolve about us, to open and close, according to the turns and dips and zig-zags and snake-like evolutions of the road. One moment we overlooked a deep valley, a rocky defile, with a rushing stream making music in its gloomy recesses; the next we were ourselves in the depths of the valley, over-shadowed by the towering, snow-clad mountains.

At last we reached Liddes, where we must part with our interesting old charioteer.

"It has been the best drive of the season," he said with elation in his voice. "I scarcely remember two more perfect days in my life. It would have been a sin to miss the excursion. Never do I grow tired of it, but enjoy it as much as ever I did in the days of my youth. But alas the stiffness of age is beginning to find me out; rheumatism and lumbago warn me that I must one day go the way of all flesh. I was once the hardiest, quickest mountain climber in the canton; but that is past. I shall never climb again. Now you are going into lunch, and I wish you *bon appétit*, messieurs."

Our far less interesting Martigny driver was lounging outside the inn with his hands in his pockets as we came up, and manifested a sleepy pleasure at seeing us again. He had evidently spent his time in gracefully doing nothing, and it was rather difficult to rouse him to the fact that we should very shortly require his active services. The woman who had waited upon us yesterday came forward, and placed her whole larder at our disposal: the resources of said larder consisting of tough chicken and delicious raw ham. This was not sufficiently tempting, and yesterday's Arcadian luncheon still dwelt in our minds; so much to the woman's chagrin we insisted upon repeating the order. We should save time too; for though the chicken was killed it had been cackling an hour ago, and had to be dressed. Our sumptuous omelette carried the day and soon came in in triumph. It did not, however, come in alone: the woman bore with it a petition.

"Monsieur," she said, placing the omelette on the table and then standing at ease, "I have a favour to ask you. It is not for myself," she explained, theatrically placing her hand upon her heart and drawing herself up to her majestic height of four feet six: "I am only the serving-woman; it is for the master and mistress of the establishment. They want to go in to Martigny to-day, and hope you will graciously accord them places on the front seat beside your driver."

We confess that we were very "graciously" put out by this request. If we did not grant it, we incurred the risk of being considered churlish and disobliging Englishmen. On the other hand if



AIGUILLE DU DRU.

we accepted the situation, the pleasure of our drive was at an end. With two very substantial people in front of us besides the driver, we should lose the scenery, a very important consideration ; whilst our horse for the next few hours would certainly protest against having to carry at the very least double weight. We reflected also that the owners of the inn had their own horses and traps at their command, and it was only to spare these that they had made the somewhat bold proposal.

Taking all things into consideration, we felt justified in expressing a polite regret that we must decline the escort. Fortunately for us, the omelette had been made, and the excellent Lamarque was on the table, or the chances are that, on Bruno's principle of sweet revenge, Madame at the Hotel du Mont Blanc in Martigny would have had nothing but dead corpses to receive when the elegant equipage dashed up to her door.

So we departed minus Monsieur et Madame. Our driver for a short time looked surly and depressed ; he had no doubt been promised an extra *pourboire* : and the comfort of the horse and the convenience of ourselves were of course very secondary considerations to a weighty silver coin reposing in his pocket. But he was possibly a philosopher and soon recovered the small amount of cheerfulness habitual to him.

The beauty of the drive was so great that over and over again we congratulated ourselves upon our firmness of mind and the absence of obstructionists in front of us. The valley narrowed as we made way. The Drance widened as it approached the point where it falls into the Rhone. We left the snow hills behind as we came down to a level with the ordinary world. Other hills there were to right and left of us, lofty and majestic, but their sides were green ; paths led up them to solitary houses or a clustered settlement. We clattered through the villages, the horse, homeward-bound, going with a will. The mill wheels were still turning ; and the dark chalets, age-stained, colour-stained, with their gabled roofs, were still sharply outlined against the blue sky. Sometimes the broad river ran through in the very centre of a village, and a wooden bridge spanning the rushing stream connected north with south.

At last we reached Martigny. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and the little town was in full work. Coopers in the middle of the road were making enormous vats preparatory to next year's vendanges ; the brown wood would put on a rich red colouring as the wine matured. Our baker's shop was open, but no fine aroma of hot bread greeted us as we passed. That was reserved for the early hours and the morning air. -We wondered where Bruno's future master lived, and half regretted we had not asked his name and address, that we might offer him fifty francs for his bargain. Bruno's appealing eyes haunted us reproachfully. Madame at the hotel



received us with effusion. It was not put on, but was born of her largeness of heart. Her demonstrative manner was in exact opposition to her daughter, who was calmness itself. Fortunately. It would never have done for one so young and beautiful to be at the same time gushing. H. C.'s susceptible nature would have gone to pieces and broken up in a general disorganisation. As it was, it took us all our time and eloquence to keep his mind fixed on the blue skies and rushing streams and snow-bound hills.

"You are back again," cried Madame, hastening forward. "You are welcome as the sunshine," in a voice that seemed to embrace mankind in its warmth of greeting: but demonstration with her was quite safe. "And your bones are not broken," she laughed, "and the calèche has not become a hearse, nor the pleasure-excursion a funeral cortège. What did I tell you?"

She little knew how nearly it all might have happened; the narrow escape we had had at Liddes. But we told her of the bold request, that had ruffled our feathers, and our real regret at having to refuse it."

"You must not regret it," she replied. "Such requests have no business to be made. They are an impertinence. Five people on that calèche! You would have felt suffocated! Fancy three substantial people in front of you, shutting out all the blue sky and hill outlines and fresh air! Monsieur, if you have regrets, you are over-sensitive."

We felt comforted by her emphatic support. It is such a pleasure to meet with a strong, energetic mind who takes sensible views of life and things, and indorses your own course of action.

We had promised the Clavendier of St. Bernard to call upon the Canon at their Martigny institution. Passing up the street through the quiet little town, we reached the church in the centre of the square. It had no merit whatever and needs no description. In the corner of the square was the abode of the St. Bernard order: a large, rambling building with many passages and ramifications, and apparently occupied by other fraternities and parish priests. Upstairs on every door was a card bearing the occupant's name.

We soon found the one we were in search of. The Canon was at home. He was a very different personage from him whom we had left at the Hospice. A man of agreeable and polished manners; a man of education and of the world, who was also attached to the church at Martigny. His room was large and square, and had the grave, subdued tone of a bookworm. The walls were hidden by well-filled book-shelves. The furniture was of dark oak, simply carved. The tables were heaped up with books: a literary untidiness that for him was no doubt full of order. "I can place my hand upon what I want in the dark," he remarked in the course of conversation. It was evident that he was an earnest student. The fruit of all this reading ripened into many a learned sermon: and we heard afterwards that he was much beloved. This we did not doubt. On the

table was a bowl full of overflowing of the small coin of the country, the result of various church collections: a large amount in weight, but small in actual value.

We talked of the Hospice; its glorious past, its reduced present, its uncertain future. He was very anxious about it; could not see his way to raising the funds for the necessary building and for future sustentation. They had effected a mortgage at a somewhat high rate of interest, and how to pay that interest alone was an anxiety.

"People of all countries visit us," he remarked; "and if all countries would contribute to our fund, our troubles and anxieties would disappear."

We suggested that he should write to a few of the chief European papers, beginning with the *Times*.

"It is a delicate matter," he replied. "I shrink from it. We are so often misunderstood in these cases. The public look upon it as begging. And there is such an enormous amount of this begging by letters, the charities, good, bad and indifferent needing support, have become so overwhelming in number that our remote claim would be lost in the endless list. In these days the demands of charity are insatiable. It is the cry of the horse-leech: Give, Give, Give! I am for charity; the parable of the Good Samaritan seems to me to point to the very keystone of Christianity; but I think, sometimes, that it is almost overdone."

"You mean," we returned, "that boundless charity leads to reckless extravagance and misappropriation."

"I fear that human nature is prone to think too lightly of what is easily obtained," he replied, with a sad smile. "There is no doubt that charity unwisely administered, and funds foolishly wasted, are the cause of many existing evils. And in this instance, England, most charitable of all countries, takes the lead."

Our interview was soon over and we parted with what seemed to be mutual regret. He was a manly specimen of a monk and a priest; there was something almost noble in his air and bearing; his voice was subdued and pleasant, and his conversation was much above the average of his order. It was the one little incident in our stay in Martigny, which came to an end that very same evening.

The previous day we had dined alone; to-day there seemed an accession of travellers, and we sat next to an American who politely remarked that he had met us the previous day at Chamonix, and was glad to meet us again.

"Pray, sir, did you come over the Tête Noire or the Col de Balme?" he inquired.

We gravely assured him we had done neither. Our neighbour opened his eyes.

"Then, sir, are you travelling with a flying machine?" he inquired, with the least suspicion of sarcasm in his voice.



FALLS OF THE REICHENBACH.

Nor that either. We had spent yesterday in going up to St. Bernard, where we had passed the night. Not even a glimpse of Chamonix had we seen in the distance. The American looked incredulous, evidently thought we were amusing ourselves at his expense.

"If it was not you I met yesterday at Chamonix, it was your astral body," he said. "I am never mistaken in a place. Did you, sir, at any time of the day or evening, feel a peculiar trance-like sensation, or lose consciousness at all?"

"We felt very frozen at the Hospice," we replied, "and certainly only half alive."

"Ah, that was it then," he cried. "I remember now, it was in the evening I saw you. I spoke to you, and you turned away without answering; I concluded you were deaf and dumb. It must have been your astral body. If you will forgive me for saying so, sir, you even now look a little ethereal and diaphanous."

We certainly did not feel so, and were making an excellent dinner. The American had evidently got mixed and was describing H. C.

Just then there was a happy diversion in the form of an inroad in the next room. It sounded as though a company of soldiers were taking possession, and proved to be the head master of a school in Geneva, accompanied by forty or fifty boys: pupils with whom he was exploring the neighbourhood. He heard that we had just come from the Monastery, and as we passed through the room after dinner (their own dinner was not half over) he got up and begged leave to ask us whether the roads were passable. The boys got up too and came round us, eager and excited, and hung upon our words. Not a few of them were English.

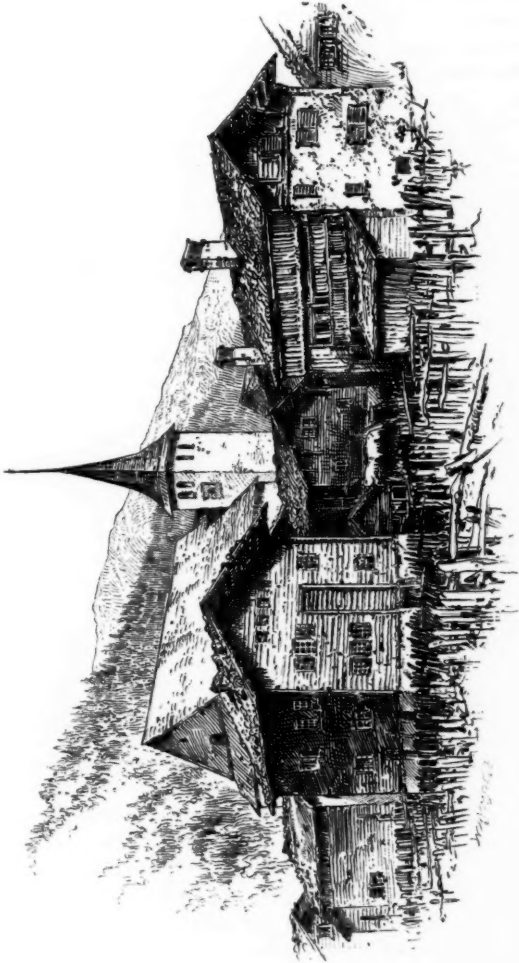
We assured them the road was not only passable but admirable, the whole excursion an inexpressible delight. Upon which a subdued cheer went up from fifty throats and rang along the ceiling and shook the windows. Madame thought it was fire, or a riot, or the commencement of a free fight, and ran in with a terrified expression; but when she found out that it was nothing but exuberance on the part of the boys, she raised her voice and joined in the cheer, not in the least knowing what it was all about, and waved her arms like the sails of a windmill.

The boys went back to their seats and the master decided that, weather permitting, they would make a pilgrimage on foot to the Hospice, starting the next morning at seven o'clock. We wondered how the monastery would put them up for the night, where they would find provisions for this small army, and what the boys would think of the Morgue. But boys for the most part revel in ghastly horrors, and the Morgue for them would have its fascinations.

At eight o'clock the omnibus came up to convey us to the railway station. There was an affectionate leave-taking on the part of madame, real regret on ours at leaving her most comfortable and

hospitable house. The bill had proved extremely reasonable—for the first and only time in Switzerland. But madame had not only a large heart, she possessed a conscience.

Darkness had long fallen when the omnibus took its way to the



IN THE RHONE VALLEY.

station. There was nothing to be seen of the snow-capped hills and the rushing river. The train came up and went on with us. We could only measure our progress by the stations. Vernayaz brought back to our recollection the Gorges du Trient, the Cascade de

Salenfe, and the deluge through which we had travelled. Had the driver escaped?

At St. Maurice we waited ten minutes and got out to find the station-master. Everything that went on at St. Maurice was reported to him; not officially, but because his interest in the daily chronicles of the place was unbounded.

"What about our driver?" we asked. "Is he yet alive?"

"Ah, monsieur!" cried the station-master. "I saw him pass the station. If you had only been there to see him too! The horse was streaming—a small Niagara; the man was half drowned. 'Monsieur Joseph,' he cried, as he caught sight of me, '*rangez vous*. This is a second deluge and the end of the world.' The calèche was almost swimming. That was the worst storm in the memory of man."

"And Bruno—where is he?" we asked.

"Come and see," returned the station-master. "You have plenty of time—and the train cannot go without my signal. Let me first get a lamp."

"Whilst we buy delicacies at the buffet," we laughed. "We must have presents in our hands for that prince of dogs."

In a few moments a small procession of three was crossing the road in the darkness, lighted by the solitary lantern. Before we reached Bruno he knew us; knew our voice, our footstep; there was no mistaking it. He sprang out of his kennel, and again it seemed that he must break his chain. We thought he would have devoured us, as he barked and raved and woke the echoes of the neighbourhood.

"I never saw him take to anyone like this before," said the station-master. "What does it mean, Bruno?"

Bruno evidently thought his hour had come and we were there to take him away. When we made our offering he would not look at it or eat it, but raved and capered and begged to be unloosed. That was all he cared about—to go out into the world with us. It went to our heart that we could not take him. We placed our offering near his kennel, and after we had gone out of sight and sound it would be a consolation. The station-master lighted us back to the train and gave the signal. As it slowly glided off we heard Bruno's bark, strong, deep, frantically protesting. There seemed now a sound of indignation about it—that human beings could be so treacherous and hard-hearted as to leave him in the lurch for the second time.

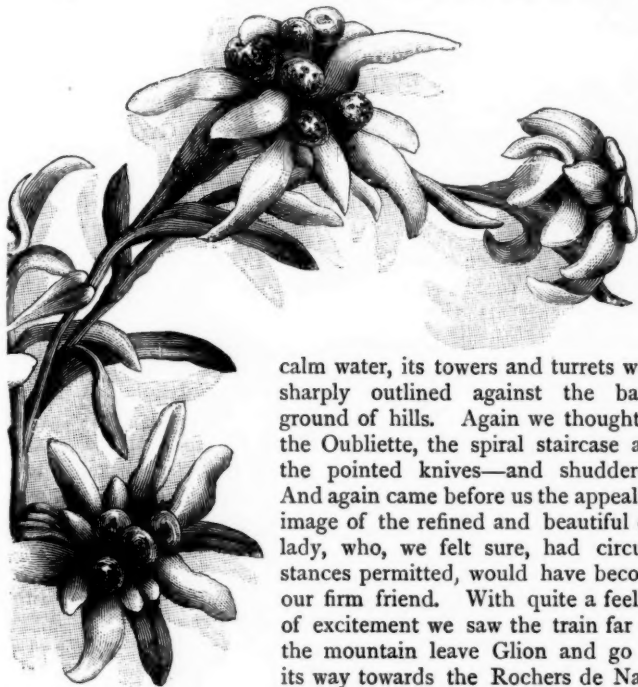
Montreux came at last, and our old quarters at the Grand Hotel—not more comfortable than madame's hospitable inn at Martigny, but the tariff how different!

We were only remaining there the night. On asking for the little old lady who had captivated us in the castle of Chillon we learned that she had left that morning for her château in Ardèche. It is always so. "Before I come, or after I am gone, the roses always



bloom." We had hoped something would have delayed her departure at least a day, but we were not to meet again. Our one human attraction was gone, and the next morning, the weather as brilliant and glorious and warm as an August day, we took passage in the little steamer for Geneva.

Nothing could be more lovely. The blueness of the lake rivalled the far-off skies. Not a cloud or the faintest wreath of mist hung about the mountains. The Dent du Midi stood out in all its massive splendour. The grey walls of Chillon were reflected in the



THE EDELWEISS.

calm water, its towers and turrets were sharply outlined against the background of hills. Again we thought of the Oubliette, the spiral staircase and the pointed knives—and shuddered. And again came before us the appealing image of the refined and beautiful old lady, who, we felt sure, had circumstances permitted, would have become our firm friend. With quite a feeling of excitement we saw the train far up the mountain leave Glion and go on its way towards the Rochers de Naye. Oh, to be there in such weather! What a paradise above the earth!

We had quite a long day before us upon the lake and for a time nothing could be more delightful. The steamer stopped frequently at places that have become household words to us all; Clarens, Vevey, Lausanne, Morges. The day was so calm, the lake so clear that we saw two worlds: one above the water, one below it: and the reflections were as vivid and life-like as the realities, and more poetical. Our human freight changed frequently. Many a town and village was wonderfully picturesque with mediæval outlines; ancient fortresses and turreted castles that had played their part

in a world that is receding from us and growing very faint and shadowy. At Lausanne the town stretched far up the slopes, and in the distance the cathedral towers were outlined. Morges, with its old castle and its ancient harbour and romantic associations was especially interesting. Here as we glided gently over the smooth surface of the water, we thought we saw far down the pile-city of the Lake-dwellers. We fancied we heard voices speaking, church bells ringing. Of course it was all imagination, but it was sufficient to plunge us into a dream of that strange story of the past.

As the afternoon went on, the lake widened and lost its immediate charm; the air grew chilly; and when towards five o'clock Geneva came in sight, we were glad that the journey was coming to an end.

As we approached it from the water its outlines were sufficiently commonplace; but we had formed no very exalted ideas of its beauty and were not likely to be disappointed. Geneva is essentially a city of to-day. Fifty years ago it was a small place with mean and narrow streets, unwholesome and unattractive. During this half century it has been almost entirely rebuilt. Few towns have had more uninterrupted prosperity. All the world and his wife have visited and continue to visit Geneva. Least interesting of all Swiss towns, it is the central point towards which all radiate. Nor can we wonder, for if its visible and tangible attractions are small, its historical atmosphere is in its way unrivalled.

As we approached the quays we saw that they were lined with strictly modern outlines; enormous houses and hotels common to the end of the nineteenth century. Immediately facing the landing-stage was one of the largest of the hotels, the Beau Rivage. It ranks amongst the first, and was so near at hand that we decided to take it; but we found it dear and uncomfortable, the bed-rooms close and stuffy.

As the steamer glided up the lake towards the landing-stage, Rousseau's Island reposed at the other end, and under the trees we caught sight of the outlines of the bust of that strange man, with his mixed and complicated and contradictory nature; full of poetical aspirations and lofty intentions, if we may believe him, joined to a constant weakness of purpose, a frailty of temperament which left him helpless and yielding in the face of every temptation.

It was the last days of the exhibition, and in the evening when table-d'hôte had come to an end, we made our way to it. The constantly wet summer had shorn it of its financial success, and the town bewailed the untoward event. It was admirably got up and many of its departments were very interesting. The whole exhibition covered an immense area. One of the sections was a representation of an ancient Swiss village, wonderfully well reproduced. Old houses abounded, old shops with mediæval wares were presided over by people in costume. In the centre of an artificial green, surrounded by old houses, a quaint old church, people danced to the music of an



AN ALPINE PASS.

old-fashioned orchestra. The musicians sat in a covered balcony. Behind them was a room lighted up, where the heated dancers went in for refreshment; drinking beer and sweet decoctions out of quaint goblets. The old-world spirit was kept up in everything. It was an excellent delusion, a very pretty scene. Business was over and the young men and women in their costumes from the different stalls and houses joined in the dance. There were plenty of electric lights to show up the very hearty if not very graceful movements of the dancers; and overhead there were the bright stars in the dark, solemn, reposeful heavens.

As for the exhibition itself, everything in the way of machinery and invention seemed represented. Watches without number; modern Swiss carving side by side with carving centuries old—the latter only lent for the occasion. Musical boxes and orchestrions, pianos going in every direction, all distracted one with their mingled harmonies. Most especially we were struck with the magnificent silks and lace exhibited: silks that outrivalled the finest efforts of Lyons and Spitalfields, and lace that in effect exceeded Honiton, and in beauty and refinement equalled Brussels. Here, if she will, Switzerland has a great future before her. Electric trams ran all about the grounds; illuminated fountains, white and coloured played in various parts. It was the Paris exhibition over again on a small scale. Truly Swiss enterprise had been at work, and the steady down-pour of the whole summer must have proved terribly discouraging.

All the same, Switzerland flourishes; and thanks to her reputation, her mountains, her glaciers, her lakes, all her matchless charm and beauty, she will ever flourish; waxing rich. But in filling her barns with plenty she must beware of herself.

Geneva we have said has been for the most part rebuilt in the last half century; looking at her enormous houses and hotels, her tree-lined thoroughfares, one might say in the last ten years. But there still remains a small part of the upper town that is ancient. Of this, the cathedral is the centre, the latter very much spoilt by its eighteenth century Corinthian portico.

It is impossible to walk these old streets of the past without feeling oneself surrounded by that little crowd of people who have made Geneva for ever famous. Calvin, Beza, Farel, Knox, Voltaire (what a juxtaposition, those two!), Rousseau, Neckar, Madame de Stael, Casaubon, de Candolle, Huber, Sismondi, Bonivard, d'Aubigné—why multiply names? And then there are a few names to cast a reflection upon the greatness of some of these—such names as Castellio and Servetus.

The streets seem haunted by that great crowd of reformers and literary stars. Their shadowy forms surround one. You pass the houses some of them inhabited, and ghostly faces peer at you through the old windows, and ghostly forms glide through the open doorways. You enter an old-fashioned room and hear Farel

threatening Calvin with the wrath of Heaven if he will not make their cause his own. Calvin trembles and yields. You enter the cathedral, and the building rings with the voice of Calvin, his



CROSSING THE SIMPLON IN WINTER.

presence fills the pulpit; his eloquence, his earnestness, his indomitable will carry the people with him, as a rushing stream sweeps down all obstruction upon its bosom. Whatever his views and

opinions, he was a man raised up for the times; and to him and his band of reformers Protestantism owes an undying debt.

How interesting were his times, how singular many of the details of his life. From his earliest childhood there seems to have been an unconscious power about him that influenced others. He was born in 1509 at Noyon in Picardy: Picardy with its harsh, uninteresting people with shrill voices and commonplace aspect; where the unrelenting east winds blow freely, with a corresponding effect upon this people of the northern province.

But there was no east wind about Calvin, and the noble family of Mormor were so taken with the boy that they in part adopted him.

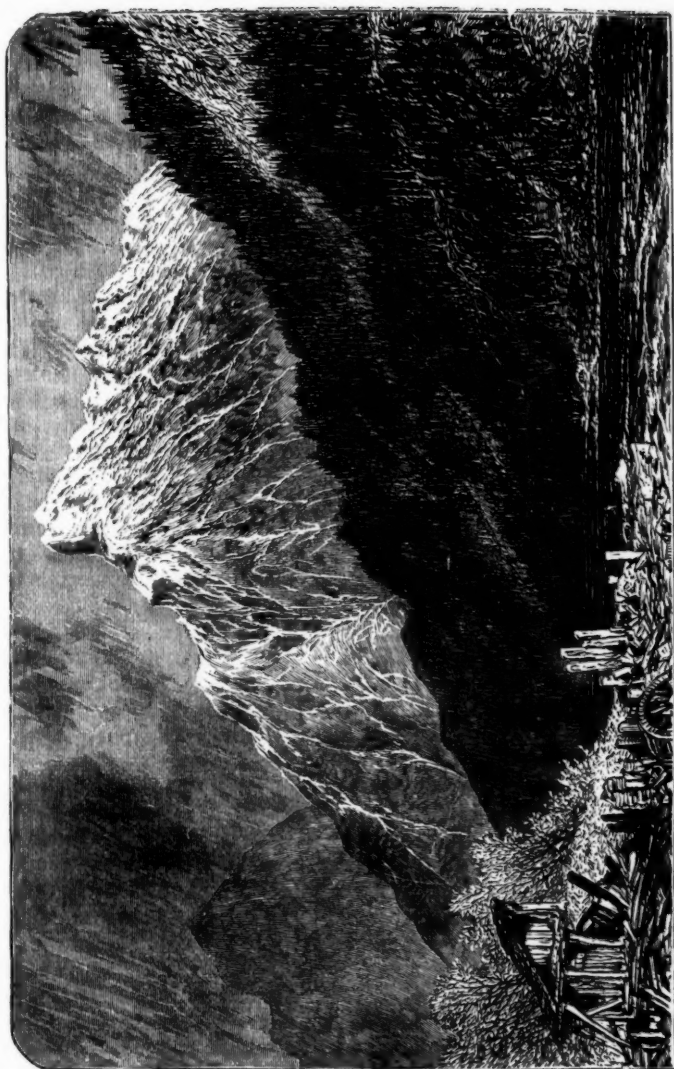
Through them he enjoyed exceptional educational privileges. At the age of 14, he went to Paris with them and became a student at the Collège de la Marche. His manner was grave and self-contained. He delighted in study, and cared nothing for the ordinary amusements of youth. His mental powers were far beyond his age, and he became a profound Latin scholar. Amongst his companions, who admired him in spite of his want of sympathy with their ways and walks, he was called "l'Accusatif." All through life there was something strong and attractive about Calvin, but never lovable, and one must deplore the few passages of harshness and hatred that stand out as blots upon the character of one who was singularly self-denying, earnest and anxious for the welfare of others, ready to sacrifice himself for the good of his cause.

From Paris he went to Orleans to read law. Here he would sit up half the night in study, rising early the next morning: habits which fatally undermined his health. Of a religious tone of mind from a boy, at Orleans he began to study the Scriptures, and very soon decided to throw up law and enter the church. He went to Bourges and under Wolmer, who so greatly influenced him, he became as great a scholar in Greek as he already was in Latin. Here, young as he was, he began to preach the Reformed doctrines. Born a Romanist, he became an eager and earnest Protestant.

In 1833 he returned to Paris, then in a state of intense religious excitement under the preaching of Farel and Lefevre. The Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I., was in strong sympathy with the Reform movement. Had the king been of the same mind, who knows but that France might have shaken off the Papal yoke, and substituted simplicity for ceremonial, a quiet confidence for complicated superstition.

And for a time it seemed that Francis would let things take their course. He was a strange mixture of good and evil; gay and voluptuous, yet capable of great heroism; ambitious and not wanting in courage and energy. He had had his "Battle of the Giants," in reconquering Milan, when the poor Swiss lost 12,000 men. He had contended for the crown of Germany with Charles of Spain, and lost





LAKE OF GENEVA. DENT DU MIDI.

it. He had had his famous interview with Henry of England on the Field of the Cloth of Gold—which only ended in Henry's forming a temporary alliance with Charles and the Pope. The gallant Bayard had knighted Francis on the field after the Battle of the Giants, and now lost his life in the retreat of the French army across the Alps, at its second expedition into Italy. He had been taken captive by Charles who released him with the loss of Flanders and Artois, the Duchy of Burgundy and all his Italian possessions—a rich ransom. He had formed his abhorred alliance with the Turks and brought down upon him the wrath of Europe.

With all these momentous matters in hand, past and present, it almost seemed that the Reform preachers would have their way unmolested. But Francis suddenly awoke from his religious lethargy, and perhaps for the sake of opposition, took strong measures against the movement.

The Reformers had to fly for their lives. Calvin escaped through a window by means of a sheet, and then put on the disguise of a vine dresser. Persecution raged against the Protestants throughout France: to find its culminating point twenty years later under that vilest and worst of women, Catharine de Medicis.

Calvin for a time wandered about, finally going to Basel, where he issued his famous preface to Francis. Seldom has an address of remonstrance been couched in more vigorous and glowing terms, and it has remained one of the chief documents of the Reformation. Unfortunately it had no effect upon Francis, and the persecution of the Protestants went on.

After visiting Italy, Calvin at the request of his enthusiastic friend Tillet, went to Geneva. His arrival was made known to the still more devoted Farel, who had also escaped from Paris. In those Paris days Farel had thought highly of Calvin. He was far more struck with him now, and resolved to keep him near him if possible. Calvin was the stronger nature of the two. Farel feared his own powers were failing, and felt that only Calvin could succeed him. But Calvin's desire just then was for a life of retirement and contemplation; devoting himself to the cause of the Reformation indirectly rather than actively. Farel, however, prevailed.

Calvin was a man of earnest purpose. Having put his hand to the plough, he threw his whole soul into the work and soon astonished Farel by his success.

The marvellous changes proceeded with the rapidity almost of a revival. Geneva had just thrown off the yoke of the Dukes of Savoy, thus breaking the link with Rome. The times were ripe for the Reformer. The people eagerly embraced Protestantism. A Protestant Confession of Faith was drawn up and proclaimed in the Cathedral church of St. Peter's. A vast concourse of people accepted it. Vice and frivolity gave place to gravity of demeanour and religious observances.

Then came a reaction. The reform was too sudden. A certain section of the people rebelled. These were called Libertines, and grew so strong in power that once more Calvin had to fly from Geneva—or rather was expelled from it. He went to Strasburg, devoted himself to study, and married a widow: but death soon dissolved the happy marriage, and though a young man, he never married again.

Three years passed away. During all this time the people of Geneva were gradually repenting their conduct to Calvin. Everything had gone wrong. The Libertines proved themselves unable to govern; disorder reigned. They begged Calvin to return to them, and he did so. This time it was to remain. His rule was established,



SWISS CHÂLET.

though not without opposition. For fifteen years the Libertines opposed him to the utmost. At last, after a semi-riot in the streets, accompanied by more noise than bloodshed, the leaders were driven from the city, and burnt in effigy. The town had peace.

Other disputes would occasionally arise, some of which were conducted with more zeal than charity or discretion. One's sympathies go out to his old friend Castellio, whom, in his religious fervour he persecuted.

He had found Castellio at Strasburg, had admired his learning, bewailed his poverty. He it was who brought Castellio to Geneva, and gave him a post in the city. Then their religious views came into conflict, and Calvin, intolerant and narrowminded, could permit no

departure from his own firmly-rooted convictions. He became terribly bitter against Castellio, and in the end drove him from the city.

It is a sad record. We have a vision of Castellio, aged and grey-headed, living in extreme poverty in Basel. We see him gathering sticks on the banks of the Rhine, to light his fire or earn a few halfpence. And we hear the bitterness of Calvin still pursuing him and declaring that Castellio was guilty of robbery.

Still more sad was the history of Servetus, or Serveide, in the language of his native country Aragon.

Servetus was so quarrelsome, fiery and impetuous that he was always in trouble. Having first made himself notorious by his religious views, he proceeded to Paris and took up the study of medicine, passing with honours. He is said to have been the first to guess at the circulation of the blood. Getting into trouble with the Faculty, he left Paris, and came into contact with Calvin, challenging his doctrines and advancing his own, which were full of error. He was brought to trial and sentenced to be burnt, a sentence altogether without defence.

Servetus escaped, and for a time lived in Provence, supporting himself by writing. After this, on his way to Italy, he had the folly to pass through Geneva, actually appearing in church. He was recognised, and Calvin caused him to be arrested.

Again he was tried, the trial lasting two months, was found guilty, and again sentenced to be burned. Calvin endeavoured to have the sentence changed to imprisonment or banishment, but unsuccessfully. The very next day Servetus was bound to the stake; his heretical works were thrown upon the piles of wood, and he died in great agony: a blot upon the times of the Reformation, a reproach to its leaders, of whom Calvin was the foremost.

From this time Calvin's power and influence were greater than ever. It reached not only his immediate surroundings, but extended to many parts of Europe. His name was powerful. He acted with great wisdom and discretion. It must be said of Calvin that in all he did, he was firmly convinced of the righteousness of his cause. He never sinned against his conscience; never even parleyed with his conscience. He spared not himself. Never strong, his untiring zeal, energy and activity, were extraordinary. If he made mistakes they were few and far between. Such incidents as those of Castellio and Servetus were rare. The good he did to the Protestant cause was incalculable. He had to fight against tremendous foes, the bitterest opposition, and he triumphed over all. He was a man more to be feared than to be loved, but, from his intellectual greatness, he no doubt felt himself separated from most of his companions: and from his boyhood had always shown himself indifferent to friendship. His whole life and soul and devotion lay in his cause; for which indeed he shortened his days. When health began to fail he would

not relax his efforts. For two years his great strength of will and determination of character supported him: and then on the 27th May, 1564, the end came.

His strong personality still seems to haunt the old streets of Geneva, just as his religious teaching and influence remain.

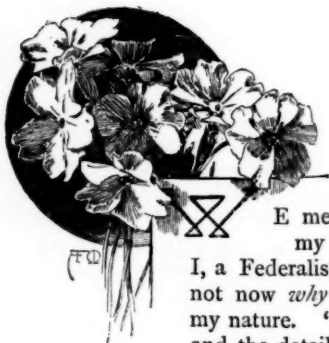
And passing beyond those streets to the heights above, we reach the spot where Servetus was burnt. It was the autumn of the year, when the trees were turning brown and the leaves were dying. The aspect of Nature was in harmony with the inhuman sacrifice. It was just such a scene as we looked upon one morning, also the autumn of the year; but we put from us the tragedy of three centuries and a half ago. Nor was it difficult as we advanced to the front of the cliff and gazed upon the marvellous view.

Far below us the two rivers ran their course: the Rhone and the Arne. A little further on and there came the wedding of the waters: the two rivers became one. For seventy miles it pursues its course through the wonderful Rhone valley, until, reaching the ancient town of Lyons, its emerald waters run side by side with the turbid Saone.

To our right stretched the Lake of Geneva, surrounded by the town. In the distance uprose those glorious mountains, everlastingly snow-capped. Their outlines melted into the blue of the sky: a sky so lofty, so serene, it seemed impossible that it had ever looked down upon a human sacrifice or listened to the cries of a death-agony. Behind us were the trees of a lovely wood full of rich and varied tints where the birds chirped their autumn song. We had the whole scene to ourselves.

From this point Geneva appeared even interesting and romantic. We looked down upon a multitude of roofs, upon softened outlines rendered slightly hazy as the blue smoke rose and lost itself in the clear pure air. On the lake a few white-winged boats were gliding about, small steamers were going to and fro. But we were above all sound, beyond all disturbing elements. Down below was Rousseau's Island, and here we felt was a scene that Rousseau must have loved, the contemplation of which must have appealed to all his better nature.





## MY REVENGE.

A STORY  
OF THE AMERICAN WAR.

When I met in the beginning of the action, I and my enemy, Richard Withers—he, a rebel, I, a Federalist; he, on foot, I, mounted. It matters not now *why* I hated him with the fiercest wrath of my nature. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and the details, while most painful to me, would be of trifling interest to you. Suffice it that our feud was not a political one. For ten years we were the closest intimates that the same studies, the same tastes and the same aims could make us. I was the elder of the two and the stronger physically; but we were both hard students, comparatively friendless, as the world takes it, and had no near relatives. Young, solitary, and visionary as we were, it is hard to make you understand what we were to each other. Up to the period of our estrangement, working together, living together, I can safely say that we had not a joy or a grief, not a pleasure or a vexation, that we did not share with an almost boyish single-heartedness.

But one day changed all. We arose in the morning dear friends, and lay down at night bitter foes. I was a man of extremes; I either loved or hated with the whole strength of my heart. The past was forgotten in the present. The ten years of kindness, of congeniality, of almost womanly tenderness were erased as with a sponge. We looked each other in the face with angry, searching eyes, said but a few words (our rage was too deep to be demonstrative) and parted. Then in my solitude I dashed my clenched hand upon the Bible and vowed passionately:

"I may wait ten years, Richard Withers! I may wait twenty, thirty, if you will; but, sooner or later, I swear I shall have my revenge!"

And this was the way we met on the field of battle; where men who ought to have been brothers fought against each other to the bitter end.

I wonder if he thought of that day when he laid his hand on my bridle rein and looked up at me with his dark blue eyes. I scarcely think he did, or he could not have given me that look. He was beautiful as a girl; indeed, the contrast of his fair aristocratic face, with its regular outline and red curving lips, to my own rough dark exterior might have been partly the secret of my former attraction to him. But the loveliness of an angel, if it had been his, would not



have saved him from me then. There was a pistol in his hand ; but before he had time to discharge it I cut at him with my sword, and as the line swept on like a gathering wave, I saw him stagger under the blow, throw up both arms and go down in the press. Bitterly as I hated him, the vision of his ghastly, agonised face haunted me the long day through.

You all remember how it was at Fredericksburg. How we crossed the river at the wrong point, and under that raking fire of the enemy, were so disastrously repulsed.

It was a sad mistake, and fatal to many a brave heart. When night fell I lay upon the field among the dead and wounded. I was comparatively helpless. A ball had entered my left knee, and my shoulder was laid open with a sabre cut. The latter bled profusely ; but, by dint of knotting my handkerchief tightly about it, I managed to staunch it in a measure. For my knee I could do nothing. Consciousness did not forsake me, and the pain was intense ; but from the moans and wails of the men about me, I judged that others had fared worse than I. Poor fellows ! there was many a mother's darling suffering there. Many of my comrades, lads of eighteen or twenty, who had never been a night from home until they joined the army—spoiled pets of fortune, manly enough at heart but children in years and constitution, who had been used to have every little ache and scratch compassionated with an almost extravagant sympathy. There they lay, crippled, and gashed, and bleeding, crushed and dying, huddled together—some where they had fallen, some where they had weakly crawled upon their hands and knees—and never a woman's touch to bind up their wounds, or a woman's voice to whisper gentle consolation.

It was pitchy dark, and a cold miserable rain was falling upon us. The very heavens seemed weeping over our miseries. Then through the darkness and the drizzling rain, through the groans and prayers of the fallen men about me, I heard a familiar voice close by my side :

"Water ! water ! water ! I am dying with thirst—if it be but a mouthful—water ! For pity's sake give me water !"

I recoiled in dismay. It was the voice of my enemy, the voice of Richard Withers. They were once very dear to me, those mellow tones ; once, the pleasantest music I cared to hear. Do you think they softened me now ? You are mistaken. I am candid about it. My blood boiled in my veins when I heard him—when I knew that he lay so close to me, and I powerless to withdraw from his detested neighbourhood. There was water in my canteen. I had filled it before that last ball came. By stretching out my hand I could have given him to drink ; but I did not raise a finger. Vengeance was sweet. I smiled grimly to myself, and said down in my secret heart : "Not a drop shall cross his lips, though he perish. I shall have my revenge !"

Do you recoil with horror? Listen, how merciful God was to me.

There was a poor little drummer on the other side. A merry, manly boy of twelve or thirteen, the pet and plaything of the regiment. There was something of the German in him; he had been with us from the first, and was reckoned one of the ablest drummers in the army. But we should never march to the tap of Charley's drum again. He had a ball in his lungs; and the exposure and fatigue, together with the wound, had made him light-headed. Poor little fellow! he crept close to me in the darkness and laid his cheek upon my breast. Maybe he thought it was his own little pillow at home; maybe he thought it was his mother's bosom. God alone knows what he thought; but with his hot arms about my neck and his curly head pressed close to my wicked heart, even then swelling with the bitter hatred of my enemy, he began, in his delirium, to murmur "*Our Father which art in heaven.*"

I was a rough, bearded man. I had been an orphan for many a long year; but not too many or too long to forget the simple-hearted prayer of my childhood—the dim vision of that mother's face over which the grass had grown for twenty changing summers. Something tender stirred within my hardened heart. It was too dark to see the little face, but the young lips went on brokenly:

"*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us—*"

It went through me like a knife—sharper than the sabre-cut, keener than the ball. God was merciful to me—and this young child was the channel of His mercy.

"*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us!*"

I had never understood the words before. If an angel had spoken it could scarcely have been more of a revelation. For the first time the thought that I might be mortally wounded, that death might be closer than I dreamed, struck me with awe and horror. The text of a long-forgotten sermon was in my ears:—"It is appointed for all men once to die: and after death, the judgment."

Worse and worse. What measure of mercy could I expect, if the same was to be meted to me that I had meted unto mine enemy?

The tears welled into my eyes and trickled down my cheeks; the first I had shed since boyhood. I felt subdued and strangely moved.

The rain was falling still; but the little head upon my breast was gone. He had crept away silently in the darkness. His unconscious mission was fulfilled; he would not return at my call.

Then I lifted myself with a great effort. The old bitterness was crushed, but not altogether dead.

"Water—water!" moaned Richard Withers in his agony.

I dragged myself close to him.

"God be praised!" I said with a solemn heart. "Dick, old fellow,

enemy no longer. God be praised! I am able and willing to help you. Drink and be friends."

It had been growing lighter and lighter in the east, and now it was day. Day within and without. In the first grey glimmer of dawn we looked into each other's ghastly faces for a moment, and then the canteen was at Richard's mouth, and he drank as the fevered only can drink. I watched him with moist eyes, leaning upon my elbow and forgetting the bandaged shoulder. He grasped me with both hands.

Blood-stained and pallid as it was, his face was ingenuous and beautiful as a child's.

"Now let me speak," he said, panting. "You have misjudged me, Rufus. It was all a mistake; I found it out after we parted. I meant to have spoken this morning when I grasped your rein, but—but——"

His generosity spared me the rest. The wound my hand had inflicted was yet bleeding in his head; but for the blind passion of the blow, it must have been mortal. Was vengeance so sweet after all? I felt something warm trickling from my shoulder. The daylight was gone again—how dark it was!

"Forgive me, Dick," I murmured, groping about for him with my hands.

Then I was blind—then I was cold as ice—then I stumbled down an abyss, and everything was blank.

"The crisis is past—he will recover," said a strange voice.

"Thank God—thank God!" cried a familiar one.

I opened my eyes. Where was I? How odd everything was! Rows of beds stretching down a long, narrow hall, bright with sunshine; and women, wearing white caps and peculiar dresses, flitting to and fro with a noiseless activity, which in my fearful weakness it tired me to watch. My hand lay outside the covers; it was shadowy as a skeleton's. What had become of my flesh? Was I a child or a man? A body or a spirit? So light and frail did I feel, I began to think I had done with material things altogether, had been subjected to some refining process, and but now awakened to a new existence. But did they have beds in the other world? I was looking lazily at the opposite one, when some one took my hand. A face was bending over me. I looked up into it with a beating heart. The golden sunshine was on it—on the fair, regular features, the red lips and the kindly blue eyes.

"Dick!" I gasped. "Where have you been all these years?"

"Weeks, you mean," said Richard, with the old smile. "But never mind now. You are better, dear Rufus—you will live—we shall be happy together again."

It was more a woman's speech than a man's; but Dick had ever a tender heart.

"Where am I?" I asked, still hazy. "What is the matter with me?"

"Hospital in the first place," said Richard. "Typhus in the second. You were taken after that night at Fredericksburg."

It broke upon me at once. I remembered that awful night—I could never, *never* forget it again. Weak as a child, I covered my face and burst into tears. Richard was on his knees by my side at once.

"I was a brute to recall it," he whispered remorsefully; "do not think of it, old fellow—you must not excite yourself. It is all forgotten and forgiven."

*"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us!"* I prayed from my inmost heart.

"Those words have been in your mouth, night and day, ever since you were taken," said my friend.

I lay silent, cogitating.

"Tell me one thing, Dick," I asked; "are we in the north or south?"

"North—in Philadelphia."

"Then you are a prisoner?" I said mournfully, recalling his principles.

"Not a bit of it."

"What do you mean?"

Richard laughed.

"I have seen the error of my ways. I have taken the oath of allegiance. When you are strong enough again we shall fight side by side." But before that time came the horrible war was over.

"And the wound in your head?" I asked with emotion, looking up at his bright, handsome face.

"Don't mention it. It healed up long ago."

"And the little drummer?"

Richard bowed his head upon my hand.

"He was found dead upon the field. Heaven bless him! They say he died praying, with his mother's name upon his lips."

"Revere him as an angel!" I whispered, grasping him by the hand. "But for his dying prayer we had yet been enemies. Oh, Richard! God's grace is with the simple and the pure in heart!"



# MY LADY MOON



BY LADY MARGARET MAJENDIE.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN those days Isobel, for lack of a better confidant, had grown very familiar with Janet, her waiting-woman. There was a certain resemblance in their circumstances, for Janet, during many months, had wasted her best affections on the sturdy groom, stubborn Joe; and he, though at first attracted by her prettiness, had made up his mind that she was too frivolous and foolish for him, and had ceased to court her. The silly girl's heart had been really touched, and she sobbed out her sorrow and disappointment to her mistress with unbridled grief.

Isobel was sympathetic, and drew out the girl's complaints with a bitter feeling that she understood them only too well. But when Janet dried her eyes and began to talk mysteriously of what steps she meant to take, Isobel's attention was aroused.

"I know not what recipe will keep thy lover's heart when he loves thee no more, Janet," she said. "Therefore, why talk so wildly? Thou hast naught but thy charms to trust to."

"I have more than that," said Janet sullenly. "I have woman-wit."

"And what avails that?" cried Isobel, bitterly. "As well strive to arrest the ebb and flow of the tide as a man's fancy."

"Yet is the ebb and flow of tide controlled by my Lady Moon," said the girl mysteriously. "And in life, perhaps, a Lady Moon may be found."

"I do not understand you," said Isobel wearily. "Surely this is foolish talk."

Janet came nearer and lowered her voice.

"Has my young lady never heard of love-philtres?" she said.

Isobel started.

"Hast faith in such things?" she cried.

"How should I not have faith?" said Janet, eagerly. "When I knew a woman who, in her youth, used one with perfect effect. She was a maiden from our village, and her lover proved false and turned to another love. She, poor Mary Anne, went forth, travelling night and day, to the border-land, and consulted a witch there whom you may have heard of, my lady, for she was the mother of Jock the pedlar, and was afterwards burnt at the stake in the public market-place."

"And what did the woman?"

"She gave old Mary Anne—leastways, she was young Mary Anne at that time—a love-philtre. She had to pay heavily for it—to part with her Sunday kirtle, her gold beads, her silver chains; but she did not hesitate."

"What like was the philtre?"

"Dark and strong-smelling until mixed with wine, when none could perceive more than a slight acrid flavour."

"Well?"

"She came home. By cunning ways she made him swallow it, and lo! her faithless swain became faithful again, and they were wed."

"Is the tale true?"

"Aye. I knew old Mary Anne, and have often heard her tell it; but with a warning too. The lover thus brought back by guile proved an ill husband and she an unhappy wife; but that was mischance."

"But wouldst thou have courage to try thy chance, Janet?"

"That would I!"

"But how? I know of none of those strange beings now."

"Yet men say that the young witch of Kettering Mere is yet more skilful than her mother, whom Heaven assoilzie!"

"What hast thou heard about her?"

"Stubborn Joe himself told me a story which points to some strange magic. When she—Mistress Nell Miles—was here on the night that our noble master (Heaven rest his soul!) left us for a better world, Joe was suffering from a sore evil in his hand—so sore an evil that Master Gurdon had failed to cure or even to do good to it. She, when Joe brought round the brown mare for her use, perceived the bandage, and asked the cause. He showed her the place, and she then and there did cure it."

"But how? Men say that she is deeply versed in most admirable leech-craft."

"She did but touch the wound, and from out thereof sprang a long-pointed spike. She bound it with some ointment, and in a trice the thing was healed."

"Pshaw, girl! Joe had run a splinter into his hand and known it not. There is no magic there."

Janet shook her head mysteriously.



"It was not I that did prate of magic, but Master Gurdon, the leech, who swore he had tended the wound and that nothing had been in the hand to cause it. So (he said) use the witches to draw out something substantial, the absence of which devilment constitutes healing."

"And what dost thou gather from this long story?" said Isobel impatiently.

"That Mistress Nell Miles will serve my purpose, and if I can bribe her enough she will let me have a powerful love-potion."

"Thou must take heed, foolish girl; for should Sir Ralph find thee out in such pranks, he might put thee even in the stocks."

"I have thought of that," cried Janet. "But, my dear lady, what should hinder that you should ride through the forest attended by me, your faithful maiden, and ourselves visit together her whom men call my Lady Moon?"

"If witch she be in sooth," said Isobel hesitatingly.

"Can you doubt it, lady?" And again the girl lowered her voice "See what evidence we have seen of ourselves. I say nothing of the rumours afloat, of the lights and strange visions on the mere, of current tales of her quick healing-power. I speak only of what we—you and I—have seen and known. On the stroke of six, as she came into our dear lord's chamber he passed away. Then of yourself. Did you not at the very sight of her experience a very strange malady?"

"I did indeed. Methought my throat would burst, and involuntary cries shook me from head to foot. I have indeed experienced something not altogether natural."

"True; it was pitiful to see you. Then"—and the girl lowered her voice—"all have seen and known how she hath drawn the young knight into her toils, so that the bright gaiety of his youth has changed, and all is altered. Tell me not that this maiden is no witch. We have proof enough to burn her!"

"Peace, Janet. You frighten me!"

"Nay, dear lady, I am but vehement when I see the injury she hath wrought to one I love as I have ever loved you, my mistress. And if by her own hand we make her undo her unholy work, will it not be a fair revenge? For—I fear to whisper, lest I give sore offence—is it not true that my young lord's fugitive, unstable love——"

"Be silent, girl!" cried Isobel, stamping her foot. "Thou goest too far. Leave me! Let me think—I would be alone."

Janet said no more. She completed the braiding of her lady's raven hair, and then left the room, a smile of evil satisfaction on her lips, for she knew that she had accomplished her work.

Isobel sat down by the window-seat and buried her face in her hands. She was torn by conflicting feelings. What she had long suspected was then true. Even the outside gossiping world had seen

and discussed the fact that, from the date of Sir Ralph's acquaintance with Nell Miles, his love, or fancied love, for herself had died away. This pale girl, colourless and pure as Lady Moon herself, was indeed her rival.

The hot jealousy burned in Isobel's breast—burned and tortured her. Ralph was hers, her own property. All her life she had looked on him as her destined husband. She had no hopes, no future apart from him, and with all her heart she loved him passionately. She had been so certain of him that she had scarcely cared to take pains to attract or please him. What should come between them? Was not their proposed union the dearest wish of the family? Isobel wrung her hands frantically as she thought of the cold calm with which his eyes met hers, the careful courtesy of every little service that he did for her, the indifference of his smile when she strove to provoke or contradict, and, worst of all, rankled in her mind the cold displeasure with which he had spoken to her when she alluded to the Kettering-Mere rumours.

"My love! my love! and I would have died for you!" she cried aloud in her agony; and she abandoned herself to a torrent of grief.

The storm spent itself at last, and the fury of her passionate weeping was succeeded by pangs of jealousy, so keen that her handsome face was wrung and contorted by the vehemence of emotion, so that, instead of a beautiful girl, she looked a violent and vindictive woman.

"I will do it," she said to herself, "even though in my inmost soul I scorn the foolish superstition that would attribute supernatural power to a girl like myself—even though I know it to be an absurd lie, yet will I do it. No insult that I could devise could be more deadly—nothing more surely lead to shaking the blind infatuation of my own lost Ralph. He shall know what all the outside world deem this woman whose very name—My Lady Moon—smacks of magic and the forbidden art. He will never have courage enough to brave the world—his world in which we live. I will do it!"

She rose and once more called her waiting-woman.

"Janet," she said, "to-morrow we will ride together to Kettering Mere. Dost know the way?"

"There is but one way," said the girl, turning very pale now that she had gained her point; "and stubborn Joe will tell it to me."

"Then learn it well, that we make no mistake. And now, Janet, I will to bed. Set the window wide—the room is stifling. I am sorely wearied, and would sleep."

"God rest you, lady!" said the girl as she obeyed.

That evening Sir Ralph left the Castle with Joe. He bade adieu to his mother, bidding her not expect him for some days, for that he rode forth on urgent business. She asked no questions, but kissed and blessed him. His face was full of anxiety, for now that Father

Johnstone had been compelled to fly, the position of his young wife, quite alone in that profound solitude with only her old nurse, became too full of danger. His plan was formed. A few days he would spend with her in the enjoyment of the perfect peacefulness of their tranquil life, and then he would tell her that the moment had come in which it would be well to proclaim his marriage and bring his young bride home.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE sun was setting in a flood of rosy light all over Kettering Mere as Ralph Stourton slowly propelled the boat through reeds and water. Nell, his young wife, sat leaning back with one hand trailing in the water, the other fondly caressing the silken face of Ombra.

"Hasten, Ralph, hasten!" she cried. "We must be home before yon fiery sun is quite out of sight, for the hour of sunset is the most deadly of all, and you are not accustomed to the marsh-vapours as I am. Even with all your practice of late, you do not yet equal me in speed."

"It is true. But then, are you not *My Lady Moon*? the child of the mere?" he said, laughing.

"See those perfect lilies! Oh, Ralph, yet one moment's pause!"

"Not so. I will run no risk, and you shall perforce try your own behest. And there are enough. See, the boat is full of your spoils."

"Tyrant! None are so fine or so perfect as yon waxen cups."

"The things we have never equal those we desire," he said lightly.

"Is it so?" she said. "Alas! that were a sad thought and untrue. At this moment I am absolutely and entirely content; my cup is filled to the brim."

"And you have no wish no longer unfulfilled?"

"I first will put aside the wish and longing for peace and goodwill among men, and the more perfect assurance that far in the world beyond the stars the blessed dead are ever growing into happiness. I put these aside, and dwell only on the perfection of the moment, and that is radiant, glorious, my husband!"

He bent over his long pole and drove his boat through the water. "That saying of yours sinks deeply in my heart, sweet one," he said. "Would that we could stop the wheel of time and stand still where we are; but it may not be. See the mist rising in soft white billows touched with transparent gold. It is the waving robe of the fever-spirit that we see! We must on in life, ever on!"

"And you?" she said earnestly. "Is this not enough for you? I mean enough foretaste of Paradise to teach what perfect happiness can be?"

He paused for a moment, and then said gently, "No, love, no! It is very beautiful, very sweet, but its very charm consists in the fact that it is but a breathing-space, a rest after toil, an ante-chamber to

the world in which men live, not dream ! the world which awaits us both."

"Ah, that world !" cried Nell, burying her face in the soft coat of her favourite. "I dread it, and yet long for it. I dread my own ignorance of its ways, and I long for it that I may know more of you, of what your life has been, and what you are among others ; but I doubt me whether I shall ever be fit to take any but the humblest place, not at your side, but at your feet, my own true love !"

"Who could reign so sweetly as you, my fair young queen ?" he cried.

Nell shook her head. "I have one still greater anxiety," she said. "Your mother, Ralph. What if she deem me so unworthy of you that she steel her heart against me, and give me no part in her life !"

"My mother loves me," he said gently.

"Aye, she loves you, and that will be my strength. Already my heart goes out to her in love, Ralph, and I can see ever before me the beautiful face strained with care and suffering, the ineffable tenderness in her soft blue eyes. Stop, Ralph ! See, they are signalling to us from the house !"

Ralph Stourton stopped the boat. "What ? When ?" he exclaimed.

The sun had now disappeared below the horizon, but still a delicate rosy colour flooded softly over the misty waters, and the drops which fell from the pole were like flashing rubies. In a lower window of the house, now some few hundred yards away, was a little gleam of crimson light.

"It is a danger-signal," said Nell hurriedly. "My own Ralph, give me the pole. I know well what to do."

He could but obey her hurried whisper, and she sprang to his place. Under her swift management the boat sped through the water, rapidly gliding into a narrow channel overhung by giant reeds, through which, with practised skill, she forced her way. After five or six silent moments they reached the islet, on which stood the hut well known to the hunted refugees.

"Here must we wait," said Nell, fastening the boat to the overhanging bough of a vast willow. "And they will let us know soon from home the reason of this precaution."

"It will be cold," said Ralph uneasily ; "and you, my Nell, will be exposed to the damp fog."

"Not so," she said, and she led the way up the bank. The hut was of mud and wattled, and thickly thatched. She opened the door with a key hanging with others from her girdle, and they went in. It was dry and warm ; materials for a fire were there in readiness, and on the rude table stood a stone jar of some strong spirit, corn-brandy or Dutch Hollands, and a drinking-horn. On the hardened mud-floor were laid thick sheepskins.

"Here it is dry," said Nell gently. "The place is in frequent use,

and of late some one has been living here. Now if you will but strike the flint and make a fire, I will look forth and see what Rachel signals."

Ralph Stourton obeyed, but he felt discomforted and ill at ease, he brooked not hiding, and mystery and secrecy irked him sorely.

Nell went out very quickly. Some hundred yards right of the hut a narrow peep-hole had been cut with infinite care and skill through the forest of reeds and alders, and through this narrow hole one saw the signal lights flashing from the distant window. The red lamp had been turned round and now exhibited a blue side.

Nell came back to the hut.

"Ralph," she said, "Rachel signals to tell me that I may return but alone, that some danger threatens all other. Will you wait here, sweetheart, while I go and find out what has happened?"

"I like it not," cried Ralph vehemently. "I am not wont to hide from danger. I will not stay!"

"And yet," said Nell, "if it mean only that some of your own people have come hither? You hold still to secrecy about our marriage, Ralph, do you not?"

He hesitated.

"Not so," he said; "but I would choose my own time to make it known, and if anyone hath dared to come here to spy upon me, then——"

"Let me go," said Nell entreatingly. "If it be as I conjecture, that they have sent to seek you, then will I put them off the scent, and so leave you to choose your own time and occasion, my beloved. I, for my part, am altogether content."

She spoke with such sweetness, and looked up at him with such loving trust in her beautiful eyes, that he bent down and kissed her passionately.

"It shall ever be as you may choose, my own sweet wife?" he cried, and the frowns passed away from the young knight's brow as he watched her leave the hut, and go away swiftly towards the boat.

In five minutes' time the punt grated against the stone steps at the foot of the moss-grown balcony, and Nell sprang lightly to land with Ombra on her shoulder.

Old Rachel was standing waiting for her, the withered face swathed round by her white coif.

"Hist, my lamb!" she exclaimed, "I would know whether I have done well to summon you thus without your young lord. Two ladies have come riding through the forest, one with hair like the plumage of the crow, the other, methinks her waiting-woman, though the minx gives herself airs that would better become her mistress."

"Doubtless it is Mistress Isobel," cried Nell, the soft colour fading from her cheeks. "Come, Rachel, take me to them."

Nell hastily adjusted the black snood around her head, from which flowed down the long shining hair. She wore the black gown she

had habitually worn on the mere, and in her hand almost unconsciously she yet carried a great waxen water-lily.

Then she came timidly forward to greet her guests, pausing to make a courteous reverence as they both rose from their seats.

"Ye are welcome, fair ladies," she said—"most welcome to my poor house."

Isobel offered neither hand nor cheek in greeting, only re-seated herself and began to speak in a voice somewhat peremptory in tone.

"Am I right in addressing thee, maiden, as my Lady Moon?"

Nell laughed a little as she answered.

"Nay, nay; that is but a playful name given to me by my humble neighbours, bestowed on me to commemorate my strangely-coloured hair. My name is Nell."

"Well, Mistress Nell, I would enter into a matter of business with thee."

"First, let me ask: will you eat and drink? To reach this place, you must have ridden far."

Isobel shuddered.

"Nay," she said, "I will touch no food in this house, and I would speak with thee alone. Leave us awhile, my good Janet."

Janet looked rebellious; but Isobel would brook no disobedience.

"Go!" she repeated, and the girl obeyed sullenly.

Then Isobel turned towards Nell and sat forward in her seat facing her.

"This is a fair house," she said, "and needs but fitting furniture to be right beautiful."

"I mind me of the time when it lacked not draperies and many beauteous things," said Nell softly. "But they melted away before the shadow of pale poverty."

"Art so very poor?" said Isobel, striving to infuse a tone of sympathy into her voice.

"Nay, not myself—I have enough—but our people have been in sore need."

"I applaud thee and admire thee, Mistress Nell," said Isobel, "that to supply their needs thou hast practised leech-craft and even surgery."

"My skill is nought," said Nell innocently. "All that I know I learnt from my own dear mother—God rest her soul!"

"And she, I have heard, was learned not only in the ailments that attack men's bodies, but in ministering to their minds and diseased spirits. Was it not so?"

"Yes. Folks came from far and near to receive the comfort none could give like her."

"So have I been told," cried Isobel eagerly. "Tell me, maiden, hast that power also descended on thee?"

"The power of sympathy? I know not yet. It hath scarce been proved. They say those that have known pain can best understand it. I have been very happy."



"I do not speak of sympathy," said Isobel impatiently; "but of far more substantial help."

"Of medicine?" said Nell.

"Of medicine of a peculiar kind. Dost believe that medicine can affect mind as well as body, maiden?"

"Aye, that do I," said Nell eagerly, "for the maladies of the body so oft sorely affect the mind."

"And likewise a sad and joyless mind, or what men are wont to call a broken heart, will affect the body's health," said Isobel.

"In a very marked and sad manner," said Nell gently.

"It is for a trouble of this nature that I have come to consult thee, Mistress Nell," cried Isobel.

Nell looked at her earnestly.

"And yet," she said, "sorrow and care can scarce have touched you in your sheltered life?"

"Look at me!" cried Isobel. "This colour on my cheek and lips is the scarlet flush of fever. Feel my hand: it burns. The pulse beats fast and hard. I cannot sleep at night: I cannot rest by day. Ever there is a singing in my ears and a heavy aching in my brow. From food I turn with loathing. And see this kirtle? A few months ago it clasped me close, and now it hangs all loose, so have I wasted away."

"Alas!" said Nell. "And have you then consulted no learned leech?"

"I will have no leech!" cried Isobel, rising to her feet and standing before Nell with her hands clasped on her breast. "It is not medicine that I crave! Listen, maiden, and I will bare before you the secrets of my soul. I am consumed with sorrow, burnt up with passionate jealousy, because my own love hath proved false to me."

Nell started to her feet, the colour fled from her cheeks leaving her white as driven snow.

"Your love?" she faltered.

"Yes," cried Isobel, her voice rising to a sort of cry. "All through the bright days of our childhood we loved each other; our love was sanctified by the approval of his mother, of his sainted father who is now in Heaven, and when our child-love ripened into the one love of life, the love of man and woman for each other, then life became a radiant joy and in the Spring-tide of the year we should have been wed. But—how shall I tell thee? for what canst thou understand of such things, thou cold, pale child!—a blight passed over us. I know not of what nature, something strange and sinister, some influence to which I had no clue which drew the warm human heart away from me, which changed him from a light-hearted boy and made him a wan and sorrowful man, a man at war with his own better nature and his own fair honour which yet strove to keep him in the honest path."

"And—and," faltered Nell.

"And I? what became of me wouldst ask? I will tell thee. I tried every art a modest maiden might. I wore his favourite colours, followed his pursuits, waited on him, worshipped him, and even as I did so I felt the power slipping from my grasp, the strange malignant influence drawing him away, the old love dying fast, and then stone dead, and, God help me, when I found it was all over, my poor heart it broke."

Isobel burst into stormy weeping.

Nell stood quite still as if petrified. The shock was great, her throat was parched, her trembling hands cold as ice, and her large eyes dilated till they seemed to shine with pain.

Suddenly Isobel flung herself on her knees, speaking with broken tones and clasped hands.

"And see, I have come to thee, maiden, to ask thee, to implore thee to help, to save me, for thou only canst."

Nell covered her face with her hands. "I? What can I do?" she moaned.

"Palter not with me," cried Isobel. "Is it not enough that the proudest lady in this land is at thy feet pleading for thy mercy? Is it indeed not enough? Still thou must deny thy power, the knowledge and the cruel strength which have brought me so low."

"Alas! I understand you not!" cried Nell.

"Thou liest! false girl! Nay, nay, forgive me. I upbraid thee not! I kneel to thee. Need I then speak plainly? I would have thee give me out of thine unholy stores a potion, a love-philtre that will give me back my lover's heart!"

Nell uttered a faint cry.

"Dost understand me now?" went on Isobel, rising to her feet and speaking slowly. "I see that pleading is in vain. I will appeal to thee in other ways. Thou art poor! I have wealth and gold and jewels, and thou shalt have them all. Give me a philtre that I may see my lost love turn to me again, the love light in his eyes, the dear words on his lips which shall confess that he was overpowered and drawn away by foul witchcraft!"

"You are mad!" cried Nell.

Isobel laughed wildly. "What bribe shall I offer?" she cried. "Perhaps the best of all would be my protection, for I am powerful, and perhaps thou dost not know what is said of thee in the outer world?"

"God will protect me, and my mother's prayers."

"Holy things have nought to do with such as thou art. Hist, girl!" and she lowered her voice to a hissing whisper. "Thou art altogether in my power. Do as I bid thee, or beware of me. Hast ever heard of the witch-finder?"

"God will protect me, in Whom I put my trust," said Nell, and as she looked upwards with clasped hands her face was that of an angel.

"Then will I do my worst!"

As Isobel spoke, standing before the fair girl with the dark face of a fury, the door on to the balcony was thrown open, and Ralph Stourton came in.

The waiting in concealment had proved unbearable, and he had crossed the mere in the small boat kept by the refugees, and arrived just in time to hear Isobel's last words.

Nell could no longer bear it. With one sobbing cry she flew to him, throwing herself on his breast.

"Ralph! Ralph! help me!" she cried.

"What is this, Isobel?" he said sternly, while his arm lovingly encircled the trembling girl.

Isobel's face was livid now; her voice was low and husky.

"I have been warning this woman," she said, "that her doings and her reputation are well known."

"I warn you, my cousin," he said, "to speak more carefully, for this lady is my wedded wife."

Isobel uttered a sharp cry.

"Say it not. For thy mother's sake, for the sake of thy dead father and the love we once bore each other, unsay those words, Ralph."

"I cannot unsay God's truth, Isobel. This Nell is mine own precious wife, and in a few short days, when it seems fit to my mother, will I bring her home."

Isobel staggered back. Ralph watched her silently and with strong compassion as she fought hard to control herself. At last she gasped—

"I would go. Send for Janet. Let me go!"

Ralph whispered to Nell.

"Leave us, Nell, I beseech you. Send Janet hither. The sooner this is over, the better for us all."

Nell glided away. Ralph did not speak. He mercifully walked to the window, not to appear to see the torture in his cousin's face.

Presently Janet came in, looking white and scared, and Nell followed, carrying in her hands a cup of wine.

"Drink this," she said sweetly. "It will restore you."

With a quick irrepressible movement Isobel dashed it from her hands, and it fell crashing to the ground. The grey cat Ombr sprang on the table with a hissing sound, arching her back and spitting fiercely.

"Take me away!" cried Isobel, catching at her cousin's arm.

He would have angrily refused, but that he caught a wonderfully loving, pleading look from Nell's sweet eyes, which seemed to beseech him to bear with this frantic pain. So silently he led her out and summoned Joe to bring round the horses.

## CHAPTER XVI.

RALPH STOURTON no longer hesitated as to the public declaration of his marriage.

Hitherto Father Johnstone had always been there, and in his charge Ralph had known her to be safe. After his departure nothing had occurred to frighten Nell and her old Rachel, for the soldiers who had come in search of the recusant priest had been under the command of an officer well-known to them as one of the small secret Papist congregation. But this might not always be the case, and a cold fear made Ralph shudder as he reflected on the roughness and even danger to which his young wife might have been exposed had it been otherwise.

So the young knight made his announcement with all due formality. He sent a notice of the marriage with an attested copy of the marriage-lines, prepared for this purpose by Father Johnstone, to Dr. Abraham Burnside, to be placed in the parish registers. He signified his wish to the Mayor of Baignton, Master Ambrose Kirby, that the name of Eleanor his wife, now Dame Stourton, should be entered in the town records, and finally he wrote most carefully a long letter to his mother, in which he informed her of his marriage, and prayed her of her love for him to welcome his bride as her daughter. This letter he despatched on the day following Isobel's visit by the faithful hand of stubborn Joe. Then for two brilliant summer days, glorious with the sweet scent of vegetation and the hum of bees, did the young pair enjoy the last of their sweet solitude. And the evening of the last day came.

They stood together on the balcony in a wondrous flood of moonlight; Nell's cloud of silvery hair was all blown backwards as it had been on the first day that he had seen her.

Beneath their feet stretched the long lines of gleaming water and dark reeds, and across the sky, from right to left, across the face of the moon herself, sailed, slow and heavily, two great white owls.

"And to-morrow, love—to-morrow," whispered Nell, "all will have passed away, even as the moonlit night merges into garish day; and you and I will have entered into the great world."

"You would not have it otherwise, my Nell?" he said lovingly.

"I do not know. I cannot tell what may be in store for us. Ralph—my Ralph—if it seems to you in that new world that I am lost and astray, and not as those to whom you are accustomed, say, you will not weary of your foolish wife?"

"I weary of you! God be my witness, you shall be a thousand times more dear!"

"I am very happy to-night, beloved; but oh, forgive me if also I am sad. Here I have known no cares; the troubles, the anxieties

that wore my mother to the grave, passed over my happy childhood, they never darkened my bright life, but now—now——”

“My Nell, childhood cannot stay with us for ever, and more vivid joys entail more vivid cares. You would not barter this our love for childhood’s simple joys?”

“No—no; a thousand times would I say no to that! But yet, have patience with me, Ralph! Think; you know the great world; but I—I am as one stepping forward in the dark, and only conscious that your dear hand is holding mine. Even thus hold it, love—fast, very fast.”

The moon shone over her as she spoke, her great magnetic eyes looked up trustfully into his.

He spoke tenderly. “Have no fear, sweet Nell; I will guard you. I will teach you all that you would learn, and your shield, my wife, shall ever be my heart!”

There was a swift rushing sound, and the great king-swan, flashing like snow in the moonlight, swam swiftly across their vision, followed by his graceful wives. A bat whirled and swooped after the dancing gnats, which hung in mist-like clouds over the waters.

“There is a most strange charm in this desolate home of yours,” said Ralph, after a pause. “And you, my Nell, are well called ‘My Lady Moon,’ you beautiful child!”

“In the world, among your kinsfolk, Ralph, will you still deem me beautiful?”

“Fairest of the fair in sooth.”

“Yet am I very much unlike your cousin Isobel.”

“Name her not!” cried Ralph angrily. “She who did so foully insult you!”

“Ah, pardon her—pardon her, Ralph; I do, and from my heart do pity her.”

“She would ill brook such pity,” he said gloomily. “From the very first she has made it evident that she loves you not, and would do you all the mischief that she could.”

“Alas,” said Nell sorrowfully; “she can never do me the mischief that I have done to her, for I have won your love.”

“I never loved her. You have done her no wrong,” he said hastily.

“Yet did she think that she had won you—and the blow was very keen. Pardon her, Ralph; surely it is not difficult to forgive her for having loved you over-much.”

“And you—what if she strive to injure you, to set my mother against you?”

“She will not—believe me, Ralph, she will not. I will make her good to me. I will so earnestly court her love and gentleness that she will not be able to hold out against me. Leave it to me.”

Looking down on that loving face, Ralph told himself that she was right—no mortal could hold out against a charm so sweet and earnest.

They lingered late—until the great moon had reached her height, and in one vast effulgence of pale light, had almost banished shadow from the earth—and still Nell hung back and lingered, drinking in the wild scene with the passionate love and regret with which farewell to the home of fond childhood must ever be taken.

At daybreak on the following morning stubborn Joe arrived, riding post-haste from the castle with a message to Sir Ralph.

Lady Stourton sent him loving greeting and notice that she herself would arrive at noon in state, with a train of servants to conduct home her son and his bride.

Ralph was radiant with joy as he rushed hastily to his young wife with the news.

Nell forthwith threw herself rapidly into preparations for their entertainment, with her faithful Rachel. They prepared cakes and bread, cooked the wild fowl that fortunately hung in the larder, and brought out spiced beef and salted meat prepared for winter use. Of fine wine and home-brewed ale there was enough; so that the table in the great hall was fitly furnished, and Nell herself adorned it with beau-pots of flowering reeds and great white water-lilies.

Then she arrayed herself in her white gown and pearl-edged coif.

One of Nell's griefs was that old Rachel would not accompany her to her new home, and no persuasion from either her young mistress or her husband would shake her determination.

The old woman could not shake off a strong feeling of presentiment of evil. Perhaps it may have been that she heard more of public opinion and rumour among the humble members of the Papist flock. Perhaps she had more definite fear of the cruel reputation attached to Kettering Mere. Anyhow, from the time of Nan Miles' death she had never held up her head. She would fain then have fled away abroad with Father Johnstone, and hidden the fair girl, whom she loved with a mother's love, from slander and evil-speaking in some distant home where no one would know her story. But it was not to be: and when Father Johnstone told her that Nell was already the betrothed, and now secretly to become the wife of one of the principal men in the country, the misery of her apprehensions was such that she said all she could in remonstrance. She even ventured to upbraid the priest, who, in her opinion, was willing to sacrifice his fair young niece for the sake of securing an ally for his persecuted people. To the shrewd old woman it seemed obvious that in obscurity only, the most absolute obscurity, would lie safety for her darling.

Nell begged old Rachel with tears to forego her determination and accompany her, but she would not yield. She had made up her mind that she could best guard her young lady's interests by remaining where she was. From this spot she would vigilantly gather the gossip of the city from the net-work of secret Papists all over the country, she would know the temper of the populace, and here she



would be as a refuge for Nell, and for Father Johnstone also, should either need one at any time; and here, undisturbed and unmolested, she would pray in her own way.

When the hour of noon was near, Nell came hastily out of her room to her husband, carrying a small casket in her hand.

"See, Ralph," she said, "shall I take these with me? They are few, but of value—the last relics of my mother's jewels which she saved out of the wreck because they were my father's gifts to her."

She opened the box and showed him two jewels of strange form. One was a serpent of cunning oriental workmanship; every scale was of emeralds set one over the other so that it was curiously flexible, and the eyes were of rubies so brilliant that, as she moved the jewel to and fro, they flashed with blood-red fire.

Ralph clasped the jewel round her neck, which it encircled tightly, the head of the serpent so designed that it poised downwards on the white throat. The workmanship of the thing was very beautiful, and it became Nell's beauty.

"You must always wear it so, my Nell," said Ralph. "It gives a touch of colour like living flame, which makes you perfect, and not so altogether snow-white, my Lady Moon."

"The stars themselves burn in different colours," said Nell, smiling, well-pleased. "And you, Ralph, will wear this for my sake?"

She held out a signet-ring set with a square amethyst engraved with close writing in strange character.

"It is Hebrew," she said, in answer to his look, "and it is a marriage ring. The words signify, 'Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder;' and if you understood the language of precious stones, you would know that the purple amethyst signifies faithful love, and will, in itself, act as a charm to keep you all mine own."

She placed it on his finger. "Then will I never part with it, my Nell," he said earnestly.

Suddenly a sound of a hunting-horn blown loud and joyously awoke the echoes of the forest.

"They come! they are already here," exclaimed Ralph, his eyes shining with excitement. "What, you are trembling, my sweet wife? Do not fear. Joe, fling wide the door, and we will to the steps to welcome my lady."

Again the ringing blast of half-a-dozen horns woke the echoes, and the sound of horses' hoofs drew near.

Joe threw open the door, and Ralph led his young bride out on to the steps as the gaily-apparelled cortège rode out of the over-shadowing trees.

It was a pretty sight. Foremost rode the huntsmen of the castle in Lincoln green, with each his hound by his horse's side, and hooded falcon on wrist. Behind the huntsmen came the grooms and other

attendants in stout buff coats embroidered with the golden stags of Stourton ; these were on foot, and behind them followed pages and house-servants, then one or two armed men walking on each side of Lady Stourton's horse, whose rein was held by a staid and sober man, who for years had been devoted to her service.

Lady Stourton was dressed in her widow's robes, and her horse was draped in a saddle-cloth of black velvet, with silver stars and chains. Behind her followed some of her women, riding quiet ponies and looking eagerly about them, and the little procession was closed by other grooms, leading among them a snow-white horse, bedizened with pale blue and silver saddle furniture and with white reins, side by side with Sir Ralph's favourite hunter.

As they rode up to the door, a great joyous cheer burst from the whole assembly. Before them on the steps stood their young knight, looking radiantly bright and happy, as with a proud gesture he presented to them his wondrously lovely bride.

Her cheek was almost as white as her snowy dress. As Sir Ralph aided his mother to descend from her horse, the fair girl came forward and knelt to kiss her hand, raising her great grey eyes to the sweet face bending towards her, and murmuring : "How can I ever thank you, gentle lady, for coming thus to take me to your heart. Indeed, I will devote my very life to you."

Lady Stourton kissed and blessed her, the tears in her eyes. Then bidding her rise, she led her forward and presented her to the principal people there. With a few dignified words she bade them welcome their lady, her son's wife and her beloved daughter ; and when she ceased to speak, all once more broke out into cheer upon cheer till the forest echoes rang.

Then Sir Ralph invited all to enter to take refreshment, and as they all poured in joyously, he conducted his mother, who still held Nell's hand fast in her own, through the hall and into their private apartments.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE the whole of the retinue feasted merrily in the hall, Lady Stourton sat between her son and his wife, and talked with them very lovingly. She had obeyed the wise and noble impulse which had made her ride forth to do due honour to the bride, and by her weight and authority establish her new daughter's position, but yet her heart was full of natural misgiving. What (she could not but ask herself) could be the nature and manners of a girl brought up entirely in this wild region, away from the refinements of life, and inevitably exposed to dangers which must have robbed her of feminine softness and possibly modesty. What, then, was her surprise when she saw and heard fair Nell. Although she had seen her once before by the

death-bed of her husband, all recollection of her had been swallowed up in the absorption of her great grief, so that now all was new to her, and as she looked on the exquisite purity and sweetness of the delicate face and form they struck her with overwhelming astonishment and joy.

"How little did I know! how little!" she exclaimed; and it seemed as if she could not take her eyes from her.

"I knew that you had but to see her and know her, my lady mother," exclaimed Ralph, proudly, "and you would welcome her as one of the sweetest of daughters."

"My son's wife would ever be welcome," said Lady Stourton, earnestly. "And how much more when I can love her for her own sake as well as his."

Nell knelt beside her, the rosy colour in her fair cheeks. "Ah," she said, softly, "if you, dear lady, are so good to me, then nothing in this wide world will lack to me, save my mother."

"By God's blessing I will do my best to supply to you that lost mother's love," said Lady Stourton, folding her in her arms. "And you will be to me my own sweet child."

From without came to their ears a great roar of applause. They were toasting their new lady. The three sat on talking, unwilling to disturb their mirth.

"I suppose," said Lady Stourton presently, "that it is the nearness of the forest that makes it so very dark. Surely it is not late enough for the light to wane."

Ralph went to the window and looked out.

"Nay, but a heavy storm approaches," he said. "The atmosphere is oppressed and hot; we shall have thunder anon."

Nell look troubled. "Then will our return through the forest be comfortless," she said.

"We must wait till it is over; there is naught to hurry us," said Sir Ralph.

It grew darker, and great black thunder-clouds gathered heavily.

Nell brought delicate cakes and a little wild duck daintily roasted on a spit. She waited on Lady Stourton with the loving assiduity of a child, and with gentle care drew back the heavy folds of her veil.

"If anything is lacking to you, anything that I can do," she said, "let me do it."

"I lack nothing but repose," said Lady Stourton; and in truth she looked white and exhausted.

"My mother is not strong enough for so long a ride," said Ralph, tenderly, "even though the gentle Phoebe goes right easily."

"I think it is the heat and lack of freshness in the air that oppresses her," said Nell. "Dear lady, let us place a seat and some pillows on the wide balcony. It hath a view over the mere, and the breeze comes more freshly from over the cool water. We can pass through this door so as not to disturb the merriment in the hall."

"It would indeed be pleasant," said Lady Stourton. "It is true that thunder hath ever oppressed me, and this has come upon us suddenly. We left the Castle under a cloudless sky."

Ralph carried out a large chair and some pillows, and they established Lady Stourton on the balcony. It seemed to her a blessed change from the other side of the house, which was ever darkened by the trees, and she leaned back among her pillows, while Nell seated herself on a stool beside her.

It was very still, only the hot heavy atmosphere was a little lightened by a gentle air which now and then passed over the wide levels of water. The scene looked strange under the black clouds, which seemed to grow darker and darker overhead, blotting out all colour and beauty as if a thick grey shadow were gradually falling over all. A sulphurous taste and smell oppressed them.

"And on this dreary scene those young eyes have rested night and day for all these years," said Lady Stourton.

"I have not found it dreary," answered Nell. "There are days when the brilliancy is such that I cannot see for the dazzling of the shining water. But the most beautiful effect of all is at sunset, when all is one lovely tint of rosy gold. I love it all so well, and alas! it grieves me that you should see my home for the first time thus."

A low, menacing roll of thunder made itself heard.

The storm has begun," said Nell, "but it will not rain yet awhile, and if you are not afraid it is very beautiful to watch the lightning fires play over the mere."

"I am not afraid yet," said Lady Stourton; "but when it grows worse, call me not coward, my child, if I take refuge within, for I am not bold."

The storm was hurrying up fast, the gigantic thunder-clouds rolled overhead, and suddenly the whole wild landscape was illuminated by a blaze of lightning followed by so great a peal of thunder that Ralph started forward to put his arm round his mother, and together they gazed at Nell with wonder.

She had risen to her feet, and had gone to the balustrade of the balcony on which she half-seated herself, and with both hands above her eyes, gazed out into the storm.

Once more the heavens were rent asunder, a stream of green fire pouring forth, enveloping her in its strange electric light till her white robe and silver hair seemed a part of the flame; the thunder crashed in a splitting roar.

Lady Stourton cowered with fear. Nell's voice pierced the din close to her.

"Will you not come within?" she said. "The rain will soon begin."

Even as she spoke the lightning blazed again, the great rush of Heaven's awful artillery crashing almost simultaneously with the flash. The air was filled with a whirl of wings. Great herons and wild

ducks dashed forth into the air, even in the distance the wild swans took to flight, and the clang of their wings added to the din. A mighty willow had been struck, and smoke and flame burst forth from its wrecked branches.

"This is terrible!" said Ralph. "Come indoors, dear mother; come into shelter."

But some strange fascination seemed to root his mother to the spot.

"I am not afraid," she said quickly.

Nell was now standing upright. The rubies and emeralds round her throat flashed as she watched the wild flight of her terrified favourites.

Again the storm came hissing and whistling across the livid water. Trees and reeds and rushes swept and bowed before it. There was a loud shout from within the hall, one of the windows swung open, and the lightning, this time like blue fire through which forked flames played fiercely, glared on the terrified faces within.

Out of the opened window, with an unearthly screech rushed the grey form of Ombra. The animal, half mad with fear, leaped upon its mistress's shoulder, and crouched there, clinging to her dress and hair with wide-stretched claws.

The heads of the frightened servants filled the aperture, faces blanched with terror, some shrinking back as those behind pushed forward.

Nell put her soft arm round her favourite, calming the wild creature's fear with her sweet voice. Once more the darkness and the awful cracking of the thunder roll. In the livid light, Ralph and his mother saw her standing with her arm round Ombra, whose eyes shone green with phosphoric light. The wind blew out the cloud of her silvery hair, and the ruby eyes of the serpent on her white throat shone redly.

Suddenly, fiercely the sluices of Heaven were thrown wide and the rain poured down. With a strange shiver which passed over him involuntarily, leaving him ice-cold in the sulphurous heat of the storm, the young knight led his mother rapidly indoors and into shelter.

In the roar of the storm, Nell did not hear them go till, suddenly becoming aware of the rush of rain, she turned.

She was alone on the balcony with Ombra on her shoulder; but in the opening of the great window was a crowd of awestruck, flushed faces watching her.

Nell shrank a little, the cold rain smote her uncovered head, and as she turned and went slowly in, a curious cold desolate feeling passed over her (like the shiver of one said to pass over his own grave). It stirred the very roots of her hair.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE RESULT OF AN INTERVIEW.



"A LADY to see you, sir."

Jeremy Grigson used very unparliamentary language, but taking into consideration the fact that his visitor might be close at hand, in compliment to her sex his anathemas were uttered in German.

"How charming!" she exclaimed,

coming into the room with a little rush. "I have got my first point already. You are familiar with the modern languages." And she made a note.

"Madam," said Jeremy Grigson, with a severe bow, "I have an excellent memory, but I cannot recollect having made your acquaintance on any previous occasion."

"You have an excellent memory? Thanks." She made another note. "May I sit down? I am rather tired."

"Certainly, madam." Jeremy placed a chair for her. "And you will then perhaps kindly let me know to what I am indebted for the pleasure of your company."

"Just let me take down"—she scribbled rapidly, murmuring to herself: "Frigid manner, stately, old-world form of address, furniture chosen with an eye to comfort rather than beauty."

Her pencil paused, and she glanced at him with a smile apparently intended to set him at his ease.

"I am from the *Weekly Chatterer*," she said. "Can you let me have a photograph to go in with the interview?"

"Never had one taken in my life," said Jeremy. He was not a handsome man, yet there was something in his face better than good looks.

"Not even when you were a baby? Almost anything would do."

"Not even then. Mellin's food was not used in my young days."



"Ah! of course not. And you were reared on——?"

"Green tea, I believe. Don't I look like it?"

She wrote down, "Highly nervous, rather dyspeptic," and went on. "Talking of things that came after your time—how old are you exactly? Of course it is only women who are guilty of the weakness of objecting to tell their ages."

"I shall be a hundred if I live to the end of this. Allow me one question: what have I done that I should be interviewed?"

She wrote again, murmuring, "Modest, and apparently unaware of his own fame," and then answered:

"Don't you know that the whole town is talking of your book?"

"I don't know anything about it," he said savagely, "except that I sold the copyright for twenty pounds, and that the twenty pounds is spent."

She had got hold of an immense fact, but she dropped her pencil, and her flippant, aggressive air with it.

"What a shame," she said; "what a wicked shame! Your publishers will make hundreds and thousands out of that book. It is creating a *furor*. Such a case should not be possible; and especially when a man really needs the money."

He looked attentively at her for the first time. He had seen already that she was young and pretty; but he noticed now that there was a worn, pinched look about her small, very pretty face. He had seen the same look growing on other faces in Bohemia; it had grown upon his own; and he knew the meaning of it.

"You understand about needing money?" he asked her.

"I should think I do," she answered sharply. "Do you suppose I should be here now if I didn't?"

"Sometimes people work at a trade because they like it."

"If it were a trade I liked, everything would be different. I aspired to literature once, but I could not even make dry bread by it. Ever since I have been hanging on to the skirts of journalism, and sometimes there is a great deal of mud on them. If you only knew how people treat me now and again when I go to interview them! You may thank your stars and your genius for having placed you above all that at any rate."

"Are they often as brutal as I was?" he asked gently. "I am awfully sorry; won't you forgive me?"

"Don't mind about it," she said huskily. "I know very well what I must have seemed like to you—an impudent, brazen little wretch. I am horribly nervous by nature, and I put all that side on just to cover up the fright, and impress people with the idea that I intend to get any information I want, no matter how reticent they try to be. Often they tell me more than they intend—as you did just now—merely to get rid of me, because they think I am writing down a whole lot that they don't want said about them. I should stand

a bad chance if they only knew that I am quite as anxious to get away from them as they are to get away from me."

"If this interview is any object to you," he said, in an awkward, shame-faced sort of way, "I will tell you all you want to know. I am not quite such a churl as I pretended to be. Only—well, I am proud as well as poor, and I suppose there is no need to make the details of my poverty public?" He glanced first at the meagre furnishing of the room, and then at his threadbare clothes.

"Oh!" It was actually a little cry of pain. "Do you think so badly of me as that still? I will go now. I wish I had not come."

She turned very white as she rose, and caught at her chair to steady herself.

"For heaven's sake don't faint!" cried Jeremy desperately. He made a stride towards her, and without a word of apology, he caught her by the arm and pushed her back into the chair. "What did you do it for?" he asked with a great show of indignation. "What is the matter with you?"

"I couldn't help it," she said. "If I had gone on walking I should have been all right, but the short rest finished me. I am very tired, and——" she gave a little gasp, and her eyelids fluttered.

Jeremy dived into a wall-cupboard, and came forth with a brandy-bottle. There was very little in it, but enough for the purpose. He stood over her in a threatening attitude until she consented to drink a teaspoonful. He tried to insist on a second.

"I cannot really," she said. "I dare not. It would go to my head at once, because—because——"

Jeremy Grigson knelt down beside her and took her hand.

"Is it because you have had no luncheon?" he asked.

"Yes," she said; and her colour began to return. "Do you know how it feels?"

He nodded with sympathetic gravity.

"Been there dozens of times," he said; and he did not let go her hand, neither did she withdraw it. "Possibly you have walked the whole way from the *Chatterer's* office to this house?"

"I had no choice. This represents my whole fortune until such time as I am paid for the interview."

She pulled three-halfpence out of her pocket and showed it to him lying on the worn palm of her little grey glove.

Quite involuntarily he lifted to his lips the hand he was holding. Then she drew it away and tried to return to her former manner.

"Just tell me where you were born," she said, "and how the central idea of your book first occurred to you, and I will go."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Jeremy firmly. "I am just going to have my tea—'high tea,' because I am a homely sort of fellow. I will not tell you another word unless you stay and share it with me."

"But I have to write up the interview now at once. It must be put into type to-night."

"Very well. You can do it here while our cutlets are being cooked. You will find plenty of paper, pens, and ink on my writing-table, such as it is. Here are a few notes for you." He filled half a sheet of paper quickly in a small, clear hand. "Now I shall leave you for half an hour to your work, if you will solemnly promise me not to run off while I am away."

"I don't want to run off in the very least," she said; and she looked away from him to hide the tears in her eyes. But he saw them all the same.

When he came back he was accompanied by a waiter laden with material for a feast brought from the nearest restaurant; and he had letters in his hand, because he had encountered the evening postman on the doorstep.

She wanted to help him to spread the tablecloth and arrange the food; but he said it would make him ill if he did not wait on himself, because he was so used to doing it. So she read her manuscript aloud to him instead, and he criticised it as he stumbled about with plates, knives and forks.

They took their meal together in merry, pic-nic fashion, like children who had known each other all their lives; and when hunger was satisfied they exchanged some further confidences. They were both alone in the world, both dependent on their pens, although in vastly different lines; and they were both young, notwithstanding the fact that Jeremy's hair had a sprinkling of grey in it. Her name was Margaret; and he told her that had been his mother's name. She was very glad, although she scarcely knew why.

"I have several literary irons in the fire," he said presently; "and those letters look like business. May I open them? Thanks. Then, if the news is good, you will be the first to congratulate me; and if it is bad, it will be some consolation to hear you say, 'Poor dev——' I beg your pardon, I mean 'poor fellow.' I have not spoken to a lady for three years."

He opened the first letter.

"Good," he said. "The *Tip-Top Magazine* accepts Mr. Grigson's serial, the first instalment of which will appear next month. That MS. has been lying at the office of *Tip-Top* for six months, and I have written about it three times without being able to elicit a reply."

"Nothing succeeds like success," said Margaret. "Open the next."

He did so.

"Still better!" he exclaimed. "I applied for a post just vacant on the staff of the *Pulveriser*. It means three hundred a year for a weekly column of criticism. The last man was a very great swell, and he gave it up because one of his own books was smashed to

atoms by mistake in another part of the paper. Well, I have got the post."

"Splendid!" she said. "Now, the last one."

"Best of all!" he cried, as he glanced through it. "Because it shows human nature in an agreeable light. My publishers enclose a cheque for two hundred pounds in consideration of the phenomenal success of *The Book*, and they will be happy to allow me to make my own terms for the next one. Margaret, I am waiting to be congratulated."

He had called her by her Christian name quite unconsciously.

She sprang to her feet, blushing furiously, and began hunting for her gloves.

"I can't say half I mean about it," she stammered. "Won't you take for granted how glad I am? I must go now; the evenings are long, but they don't last for ever. I want to thank you, and I don't know how."

"When may I come to see you?" he asked, retaining her hand again.

"Oh, never! I live in such a wretched place; and you are among the great ones of the world now, you know."

"Of course," he said coolly, "it doesn't matter in the least whether you give me your address or not, because I am going to escort you home, and then I shall find it out for myself. Are you ashamed to be seen with me? We *could* stop at a tailor's on the way; but there would be certain drawbacks to that compromise."

"My clothes are infinitely worse than yours," she said humbly.

"Quite a different case," he assured her. "I believe you would look well dressed in a 'gunny-sack.'"

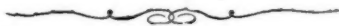
Then they set out together. He did not offer to take a cab. An hour earlier he would have done so; but he was, comparatively speaking, a rich man now, and he dared not run the risk of seeming to patronise her poverty. She understood, and liked him all the better for it.

This was a day to be remembered in both their lives.

Three months later there was a much-talked-of little wedding-breakfast, at which most of the guests were literary celebrities; but another interviewer "wrote it up" for the *Weekly Chatterer*.

Jeremy had married Margaret.

M. PENROSE.



## MEMS. ON MEMORY.

MEMORY, besides being the thing that one forgets with, as the youthful board-school humorist put it, is the Fairy, good or bad, of our lives, according as we deserve it at her hands. A silent witness of our sayings and doings, she does not wait for us to commit our treasures to her keeping, but, often without our cognisance, makes the passing scene her own, to restore it to us for our tears or laughter whenever the humour takes her. The jade has her eye upon us when we least suspect her.

Little did Cowper think he was providing so gracious an image of himself, first for a personal acquaintance and latterly for the most genial of his critics, and, through him, for many besides, when he turned, at some dinner-party, to a certain lady and said to her, with his pleasant face (the face of the poet of John Gilpin as well as of the Castaway): "Miss Catlett, shall I give you a piece of cutlet?" What a host of pleasantries does not this one of chance record suggest him to have been the author of, revealing as in a lightning glimpse the secret of the charm by which he was able to hold his own, through all the darker circumstances of his life, in the affections of so many and various people.

Little did Boswell guess, as he hung over the back of Johnson's chair at another more famous dinner-party, goggle-eyed, open-mouthed, and with a general expression of fatuous reverence and eagerness, making notes of his subject, that another chiel, the pert young authoress of 'Evelina,' with a touch lighter and nearly as graphic as his own, was committing a sketch of himself to memory's notebook for generations unborn to smile at.

If the style is the man, far more so is the memory. There are few such tests of character as the sort of things that form part of his recollections.

One man will remember Rome, in her "majestic pensiveness," as the lone mother of dead empires. Another will recall it as the spot where he first tasted some choice wine, or bought "those pretty little mosaic studs, don't you know." In the same way his memory will revert to Naples for her ices; to Palermo for her delicious "Spanish bread," over which even Newman goes into raptures. Some will gratefully cherish their sweet things of the past. Its pains, and chills, and disappointments, will have vanished or become glorified in the retrospect. They will not even wait for the end to acknowledge, as Hazlitt gratefully did on his death-bed, "I have had a happy life." The memory of others, passing by the

thousand and one bright spots with which the saddest lives abound, will hover grudgingly over some long dead, perhaps childish wrong and injury, that would almost seem to have poisoned the very springs of their being.

Shadows of material things have their limits. The long-drawn shadows of an unhappy memory extend, in some cases, almost from the cradle to the grave, so that it is difficult for one beneath their spell to respond to the sunshine of a brighter hour. All the prosperity of Dickens's later years was darkened for him by the shadows of his miserable childhood which, one cannot help thinking, need not have been so miserable as he represents it. Père Micawber, whatever his paternal deficiencies, must at least have been an entertaining companion. And (to touch on one of young Charles's sorest grievances) many a boy left to prepare his own table in the wilderness of London would think himself in clover with a shilling a day to do it on. Samuel Johnson, who in his large-hearted philosophy made nothing of having had to subsist on a few apples and fill up the vacuum with huge gulps of water from a pump in his starvation times (a mode of dieting that no doubt contributed to his after internal derangements), would have feasted like a king upon a less allowance.

Charles Lamb, no self-pitier, and whose memory, like himself, was devoid of gall, speaks of his obligations to his sister, as extending beyond the period of memory. Another, of different calibre from Elia, might have remembered of her, and visited the remembrance upon her in many a bitter moment, that she wrecked his life from almost his boyhood, and hung a chain about his neck from which he could only be freed at the grave, whither it helped to drag him.

These early memories it is, that vague undefinable sense of kindness to which Charles Lamb alludes, that help to make the bond between mother and child so dear and sacred. "There is no one to call me Charley now!" was one of Lamb's most poignant reflections when the last acquaintance of his childhood passed away. A mother's remembrance dates back from beyond the days even of childhood's pet-names, to the little nameless being toward whom her yearnings were first stirred. For before we can make memories for ourselves, we are making them for others. The child, by some unwitting look or caress, may enrich his mother with a memory that will last through life, recurring at the most unexpected moments, perhaps to deepen the yearning of her breast toward him, perhaps to plead for him in some hour of alienation. In the same way one who retains his child-heart, some creature of impulse like King Lear, whose words of kindness and of unkindness are equally unremembered of himself, utters some chance endearment, the memory of which goes far to atone for all his harsher humours.

Nothing constitutes such a bond as memories shared in common. For what is life to a number of us but remembrance? A man's Life,



a man's Memoirs, are synonymous terms. It was in much of Lamb's homely spirit of family affection that Cardinal Newman wrote to a friend, after the death of his last surviving sister, Mrs. Mozley: "I miss, and shall miss, in Jemina this—she alone, with me, had a memory of dates. I knew quite well, as anniversaries of all kinds came round, she was recollecting them as well as I . . . Now I am the only one in the world who know a hundred things most interesting to me. Yesterday was the anniversary of Mary's death; my mind turned at once to Jemina, but she was away." So also thoughts of bliss will flash upon us unawares, and weary memory, off-guard for a moment, will suffer us to snatch a passing comfort from her careless young sister, Forgetfulness:

"Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind,  
I turned to share the transport—oh! with whom  
But thee, deep-buried in the silent tomb?"

Though any such sudden remembrance, as De Quincey beautifully observes in one of his letters, is apt to put on "the blossoming of hope, and wear the vernal dress of a happiness to come instead of the sad autumnal dress of happiness that has vanished." Moore, as if in unconscious support of such a fancy, even while deploring the coldness with which memory paints by-gone joys, oddly enough chances on the image of the bow of hope, the bow of promise, for a comparison:

"Like rainbows thy pictures  
But mournfully shine and die."

Is happiness or misery the most rememberable? "The gloom that winter casts, how soon the heart forgets!" sings Moore, on whose heart sorrow evidently took a less tenacious hold than joy. While Hood, on the other hand, declares "the summer never shone so bright, as dreamt of in a winter's night." Richter, ignoring altogether the mournful aspects of the past, thereby pleasantly betraying his own "knack of happiness," says that memory is the only paradise from which we cannot be driven forth. And Sydney Smith, the laughing saint of modern days as he might be termed, to whom, however, life was by no means the affair of beer and skittles his jestful humour might lead one to suppose, maintains that "mankind are always happy for having been happy, so that if you make them happy now you make them happy twenty years hence by the memory of it." Going flat against Dante's sombre axiom as to the despairing effects of the remembrance of happiness gone by, and according to which view Francesca and Paolo, in their dreary aerial whirl together, were no such objects of pity after all. Though their past bliss having been a stolen bliss may certainly have made a difference in their case. With what exquisite tenderness do another pair of lovers, those in Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming," console one another on

the brink of fate with the thought of past affection and the memories of by-gone bliss :

"And when this heart hath ceased to beat, oh ! think—  
 And let it mitigate thy woe's excess—  
 That thou to me hast been all tenderness,  
 And friend to more than human friendship just.  
 Oh ! by that *retrospect of happiness*" (as well as by the hope  
 of immortal joy)  
 "God shall assuage thy pangs when I am laid in dust."

But the poet of the *Inferno* had probably never known much happiness, or he might have concluded that there can be a *maggior dolore* than to recall it even in the darkest hour. It perhaps remains for some poet in the Golden Age to set forth the felicity of regarding past sorrows through the mists of joy.

It has been remarked of utter misery that it is unrememberable, being swallowed up, as De Quincey, endorsing the original saying, observes, in its own chaos. While physical anguish is also said, by Coleridge amongst others, to leave no trace upon the memory and to be absolutely impossible to recall, so that once past it is for ever done with. Suffering being thus supposed to partake of the dream-like nature that Voltaire attributes to happiness, of which he says it is but a dream, and sorrow the only reality. On the other hand pain has often been regarded as a good remembrancer. Children in the fine old days used to be periodically whipped at the landmarks of their parish that they might never afterwards forget them. And Benvenuto Cellini was cuffed in his infancy by his father to impress on his tender memory, as he gravely records, the curious circumstance that he had seen a salamander. Lovers of Dr. Johnson, too, will not have forgotten his proposed simple cure for a bad memory, of which someone was complaining. "Let me give you a kick on your shin," he said with frank brutality, "and I'll be bound you'll remember it," as if he considered pain the most efficacious of mnemonic aids. A severe knock on the head against some hard substance first awakened a celebrated woman—George Sand, if we remember rightly, to a consciousness of her existence.

It was a period of unalloyed and continual bliss whose every phase and incident was stamped with such wonderful clearness on Rousseau's memory, to the consolation of his darker days. And it is, we believe, Lander who says the scenes that stood most vividly out on his remembrance from the shadowy background of the past were all of gladness.

Robert Louis Stevenson, however, attributes the same incapacity for remembrance to happiness as to grief. "The memory which shows so wise a backwardness in registering pain," he says, dwelling on the delights of a Pacific voyage, "is, besides, an imperfect recorder of extended pleasures ; and a long-continued well-being escapes, as it were, by its mass, our petty methods of commemoration. On a part of our life's map there lies a roseate undecipherable haze, and that is all."

PAULINE W. ROOSE.

## STORIES OF PRISON LIFE.

BY LINDON MEADOWS.

JIDDY SCRUMP; A PAGE FROM HER PRIVATE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

By way of varying my narrative, I shall now beg the reader's company for a time to Corridor C, the ward in which the female prisoners were confined. On my way thither I saw Mrs. Lambert, gallantly supported in her efforts by the governor and Crouch, the one dragging, the others pushing, a stout elderly lady up the steep staircase that led to the higher range of cells. This refractory individual, they told me, had been in that prison—and this I found to be true, on referring to the books—no fewer than fifty-two times, for drunkenness and disorderly conduct; and always gave a great deal of trouble. Her name was Molly Maggs. She dealt her blows, during the tender escortage described, right and left, clawed off the matron's cap, left the mark of her nails on Crouch's cheek, and tore off handfuls of the governor's hair—a loss which did not add materially to that gentleman's picturesqueness.

"But where is No. 3, the little girl they brought in the other day?" I presently asked, on opening the door of the cell and finding it empty.

"In the black-hole," replied Mrs. Lambert, with virtuous indignation; "and there she shall remain all to-day and to-morrow, and all the next day too, if she doesn't mend her manners,"—but recollecting herself, "I will have her brought out for a few minutes, if you wish to see her."

I looked into the black-hole. Jiddy Scrump—for she rejoiced in that euphonious name—was lying flat upon her face, kicking the flags with her wooden shoe-toes, and howling lustily.

"What are you?" I asked, during a lull in the noise.

"An impudent little prig—leastways so Mother Lambert says."

"I fear you have been behaving badly."

"Who could help it?—look here, Chapling, I only climbed to the grating to see you pass, and she whipped me and put me in here."

"You should not have disobeyed orders."

"What harm was there just looking out at you? I'll do it again, and *again*, and *AGAIN*!"—and the toe-hammering commenced afresh.

The black-hole not being one of the most favourable of scenes for an interview, I waited till Jiddy was restored to her former quarters, and then paid her a second visit. She was a wild-looking but handsome girl of about fourteen, with dark eyes and elfin locks. She could read and write, and had great glibness of tongue.

"Look here, Chapling," she said, with an air of confidence, and at the same time picking off some stray threads of oakum which had clung to my coat; "I don't mean to tell you that I am an angel, but I have my good points."

"Indeed; I wish there were more of them, Miss Jiddy."

"And who's to blame if there's not? Look here, Chapling, do you know what it is to have a drunken father?"

"Fortunately, no."

"Well, look here. From the time I was no taller than your stick—and I am not very tall now—I've been beaten and banged and sworn at, till I don't care whether I live or die. Look here, did you ever see a blacksmith holding a horse's hind leg atwixt his knees, and hammering away hard at it? Well, that's just the way father used to get mother's head and lay on with his fist. He was a carpenter, you know, Chapling, and had a yard at W——; and if I ran between them, or interfered, he'd threaten to saw me up, and would have done it, too, when his back was once raised. Well, from quite a child he used to turn me out into the streets, and tell me to steal what I could; and if I didn't bring home something every night, he'd first begin on mother, and then on me. This went on for years and years, until I was big enough to carry a baby, and then mother got me a place as nurse-maid; but what did I do but drop the baby on the flags—it died of discussion of the brain, the doctors said—and get turned off. There was home again, and no end to the beatings and swearings; so I thought I would poison father. And as they wouldn't sell me any arsenic at the druggist's, I mixed him up a lot of lucifer match-ends in his bread-and-milk; but it only made him bad instead of killing him, and we went on again in the same old way. No one would have me any longer as nursemaid now, and as I was obliged to find money, I took to thieving in earnest. One night there came a drunken man staggering along the road—it was an old farmer—and when he tumbled down, I and Elsie Eft—that was the girl from next door—turned him over and emptied his pockets. There was half-a-sovering and a heap of small change. This lasted a long while, as I served it out to father a shilling at a time, besides spending some on myself. When it was all gone, Elsie and I looked out for another drunken man, and we got seven shillings, with a few halfpence; but he gave us the money freely, sitting under the hedge and singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' Then no more turned up, and I hit upon a new plan. A number of farmers used to pass along on horseback, not far off where I lived, and they were generally market-fresh on returning home at night; so Elsie and I stretched a rope across the road, tying one end to a tree and holding the other. Down goes the horse and over goes the man, when we hid the rope quickly, and it was thought the horse had stumbled over a stone. If the rider wasn't hurt much we let him alone; but if he had got an ugly knock and didn't move,

Elsie and I took his little leather bag and shared the contents between us. Well, Chapling, look here, one night we were on the watch as usual, when who should come along but the spectre of p'lice, and before we could get the rope away, down *he* comes, too, horse and all; but he wasn't killed. 'It's a queer thing,' says he—just like that, Chapling—as he pulled himself together and rubbed his head, 'that they all manage to tumble just here! Let's see if there's anything wrong!' So Elsie and I left the rope hanging there and took to our heels. That trick wouldn't answer any more. It came into my head, now, to try again and get rid of father. 'Cordingly, one night when he was nigh dead-drunk in bed—mother had gone to sleep with a neighbour—I stole up into his room and set fire to the corner of the sheet; but the p'liceman happened to be passing, and, seeing the smoke, ran in and poured a bucket of water over him. He didn't know that I had set him afire; but cried out for more money the next day, and frightened me to death by seizing hold of a centre-bit—that thing with a large handle, which you turn round—and swearing that he would bore a hole in my body. I tried the crying dodge next. You have heard of that, Chapling?—no? Well, look here; it's letting three-halfpence drop in the street and pretending you have lost a shilling, when some tender old lady or gentleman, seeing the broken jug in your hand, says, 'Don't cry, my dear!' and makes up the money for you. But this won't answer often, and I next took to stealing from shops; for father began to squeeze my fingers in the big bench-vice now if I didn't bring him money for drink every night. I've nearly done, Chapling. It was just about a week ago I took to singing in the streets, but was caught by the elber and told to move on and not make that screeching noise there. So I stretched my arm across a grocer's counter while he was stooping down at the other side of the shop, and snatched up a handful of silver from his till; but was caught, handed over to a p'liceman, pushed into a lock-up, and then brought here. What will they do with me? 'Tisn't the first offence, you know, and nobody will give me a character."

I took a good deal of trouble with Miss Jiddy Scrupp (she offered to learn any number of hymns, or chapters in the Bible, for me), then consulted the visiting justices, who agreed with me that the best thing to do was to send her off to a reformatory—and to a reformatory she was accordingly sent; with a letter from myself to the "Chapling," who promised to give her a good deal of his attention and fatherly advice.

It was about nine or ten months afterwards, I believe, that, happening to be passing through B——, and within a short distance of the reformatory, I thought I would just call and inquire how Miss Scrupp got on, and what sort of a character she bore. She had positively caught sight of me as I approached, and I had scarcely exchanged six words with Miss Henn, the matron (a thin, long-faced

lady of rather severe and formidable aspect), when Jiddy came bounding down the stairs, six at a time, burst into the room, and rushed forward as though to greet an old and familiar acquaintance. She prudently checked herself, however, within a yard of me (for there were no scraps of oakum or cocoa-nut fibre to pick off my coat now); curtsied, and stood eyeing me and Miss Henn alternately, with a comic sort of gravity that would not be easy of description. She had grown into quite a splendid-looking girl, but rather of the Madge Wildfire and Meg Merrilies order.

"Why did you not answer my letters, Chapling?" cried Jiddy, half crying; "it was very unkind of you."

"Letters!" echoed I, "what letters?"

"I can reply to that question, and I hope satisfactorily," said Miss Henn, in a tone of Christian reproof. "They were the maddest things ever seen, sir; so I took the liberty of putting them into the fire; and I am sure you will thank me for having done so."

Jiddy now wept outright, and gave Miss Henn a jaguar-like glance; then she dried her eyes and begged that I would hear her repeat one of the old chapters from the Bible, and a hymn or two that I had once given her to learn. I yielded to this proposal, administered some good advice, and told her to treat Miss Henn with proper respect. Finding that I had no more time to spare, I now took my leave; Jiddy crying all the time and entreating me to engage her as a servant, declaring that she would be a pattern of discreetness and fidelity. Happening to glance up at a window as I went off, I saw her standing there, gazing down upon me with her hands clasped and a countenance expressive of deep dejection.

I am indebted to the reformatory chaplain for some particulars of Miss Scrump's subsequent history. She had often been seen attentively regarding a fire-escape that stood in a corner of the enclosed yard, and had made many inquiries as to its exact use and properties, appearing to be much edified and interested. Perhaps the admiration she then evinced may serve to throw some light upon the origin of the following painful catastrophe. One night the reformatory was found to be on fire. There was not a moment to be lost, and discovering that the front and other doors had been locked, and the keys removed, the matron and her charges were fain to avail themselves of an upper side-window, against which the celebrated fire-escape had to be placed. Most of the young girls were terribly frightened as they made the descent into a policeman's arms, but when Jiddy's turn came, she was observed to be perfectly calm and composed—nay, even cheerful under the exciting circumstances; wanting to scramble up again and repeat the experiment. This was of course not allowed, and she indemnified herself for the deprivation by getting what enjoyment she could out of the descent of the others. But when the brave Miss Henn (who, like the captain of a sinking ship, insisted upon being the last to quit the building) came down,



with her hair in papers, and a fireman's coat thrown around her, and the owner of that garment, who was rendering good service below, cried, "Now then, old gal!" Jiddy's merriment and enthusiasm knew no bounds, and she fairly screamed with laughter, and clapped her hands with delight.

The next tidings that I received were, I am sorry (or should I be glad?) to say, to the effect that she had eloped with the assistant surgeon of the establishment; having previously stipulated that the fire-escape should be brought into requisition again; down which she shot with a rather unlooked for celerity (for the machine was badly worked, and something went wrong) into the eager embrace of the expectant bridegroom below.

#### ANNE ELDRITCH; PAST AND PRESENT.

ANNE ELDRITCH was an impudent baggage of a servant-girl, with a very pretty face, a pink complexion, and beautiful, waving golden hair. She had robbed her mistress of a large quantity of rings, necklaces, chains, bracelets, and a number of other things. She said there was about a hat-box full of them, and didn't appear to be at all sorry—nay, boasted of her exploits. She even laughed when relating her story to me; not in a quiet way, but with absolute bursts of merriment, almost clapping her hands now and then at the thoughts of the clever way in which she had played upon and outwitted her master and mistress, who were no other than a young clergyman and his wife, residing on the borders of Worcestershire. It was my plan to let the prisoners run on in this way, if they chose (and they generally *did* choose, knowing that I would not take any unhandsome advantage of their confidence), as it gave me a clue to their characters, and I was often able to turn their confessions to some account. Not satisfied with a mere *vivâ voce* relation of her graceless tricks, too, Anne Eldritch took a pride in favouring me with a written account of them.

She had been a thief, it appeared, for many years, and having a great reputation for honesty, had contrived to trade pretty liberally upon it. Things were missed, but she was not suspected. She stole broken victuals and sold it to people at the door; she stole wearing apparel and sold it to Jews, who appeared at convenient intervals; she stole spoons and forks, and any other kind of silver articles that were suitable for the pawnbroker's shop, or the melting-pot; she stole money from her master's desk, by letting the lock alone and pushing out the pin of one of the hinges. She left a door unbolted to admit the thieves, pretending to be in hysterics while the house was rifled of all its valuables. She gave splendid suppers to her friends in the kitchen (which was an underground one) after the family had retired to bed; on which occasions there were "high jinks" below stairs. But the festive little party had the misfortune

to be interrupted one night by the reverend pastor himself, who, hearing laughter and the clinking of glasses, came down (in picturesque apparel) with a lamp in his hand, to see what was the matter. He was glad, however, to conceal his unstockinged extremities from the astonished optics of three or four well-dressed ladies, who sat at the jocund board—and to beat a hasty retreat. And at last, collecting the whole of her mistress's jewellery, and other pretty little nicknacks, into a hat-box, as already described, she disappeared altogether one Sunday evening after church; not being heard of again till tapped familiarly on the shoulder by a detective officer while enjoying the play at a small country theatre. These candid confessions were written for me on one of the prison slates, and signed "Yours respectfully, Anne Eldritch."

"You had better rub it out," I said to her; "for if the matron gets hold of this, it may lead you into fresh trouble."

"I've been sentenced, and don't care."

"No—but *I* care."

She opened her great blue eyes very wide, and looked at me incredulously.

The next day was Sunday, and one of the hymns that we sang happened to be, "There is a happy land, far, far away." I glanced at Anne Eldritch, and saw that she was crying bitterly. There was some right feeling left then; there was one chord in her heart capable of vibration, if carefully and tenderly touched. That little hymn had carried her back to her childhood, when she was young and innocent and happy.

"Is this the first time you have been in gaol?" I asked her privately after service.

"Yes, and I have to be here ten months more yet."

"And what is to become of you when you go out?"

"I don't know." And she turned her face away to hide her tears. I thought for a minute.

"What if you had a fresh start in life, and tried to be honest?"

"Who would take me? I have neither father nor mother, nor—yes, I have some friends."

"Bad ones, I fear."

"Well, they wouldn't be of much use, sir, if I began to grow good."

"Suppose, now, I were to find you a place, would you rob your master and mistress?—stay, make no promises yet. I once knew a young girl something like yourself, who, from having led a very bad life, turned from all her old habits and evil companions, and became—what you might become, if you only went the right way about it. You may read her story if you like."

"What, one of them tracts?"

"N-no; it is not in print."

"Oh, it's something true, then? Very well, I will read it."

She returned me the manuscript when I next saw her, and said :

"If you are kind enough to get me a place, I'll be very grateful to you, and never lie or steal any more. *She* managed it, why shouldn't I? But it must be far away from here—where nobody knows anything about me."

"I will see to that." I found her the promised "place," and the story of Anne Eldritch's past life is now only one of the "secrets of the cells."

A GENTLEMAN OF COLOUR: HIS NAVAL EXPLOITS AND MATRIMONIAL DISAPPOINTMENT.

"PRAY don't go in by yourself, sir!" cried Dance, with a frightened look. "He pitched Crouch right out of his cell into the corridor yesterday, and nearly broke his back. The governor is afraid to venture within arm's length of him, and *my* life isn't worth a penny-piece if I don't keep my eyes pretty sharp about me when we come in from the mill of an afternoon."

"Oh, thanks, thanks; but the man won't hurt *me*!" And, dismissing Dance, I unlocked the cell door and walked quietly in, though I certainly felt a little bit anxious as to what my reception was likely to be.

No. 16 was a colossal negro—he looked like the prince of darkness himself: he looked like the evil genie that rose from the basket in the tale of the Fisherman—and when I presented myself, thinking I was one of the warders, he advanced a step, as though to annihilate me on the spot.

"Ha, de Chaplum!" he said, whisking his stool from the place where it stood (I thought it was going to be applied to my head), and setting it down with a crash that instantly brought Dance's eye to the peephole, expecting to see my brains scattered over the floor. "Bery glad; like him discourse on Sunday; great respeck for de cloff; own fader minister ob de Gospel; preach to de niggars on de plantation—yah! yah! yah!" And he gave a grin which showed a terrific array of formidable white teeth.

"Oh, indeed, I am glad to hear it! May I ask your name?"—for it was awkward to address the prisoners simply by their numbers.

"A-j-a-c-k-s—A-jacks—which is a bery ancient one."

"Ah, called so, I presume, after a renowned Greek warrior, who—"

"'Staken dar, Chaplum; I hab it on de mose umquestiumable orfority dat de Ajacks affer wom dis chile called" (a powerful blow on the chest) "was a sea monster ob de fierces kind—hence my lub for de sea and de life of board ship—ha!" And this was accompanied by another broad grin and a frightful rolling of the eyes that baffles all description.

"You see him hyar, not for any shameful ack: not for robbery;

not for drunkum conduct, ob which dis nigger am umcapabul, but simply for defending him pussum from de grosses violence on de part ob de ship's officer and crew. Ajacks stremely quiet and amiable man, and under more favourable auspices—under brighter succumstance—might hab made fine character; but de fates plan oderwise. Ajacks hab stremff ob de liom; see hyar!"—and, seizing one of the bars of the window-grating, he nearly tore it out. "Well, Chaplum, to splain. Him foremas man on board de ole 'Columby'——"

"Indeed! I once made a voyage in her."

"Good; then you know cap'n and fus mate; bof wus dan any ob de brute creashum. Sail from New York; begin to kick and cuff Ajacks; dis nigger no stan dat; kick an cuff gain; den pick up cap'n and fling him oberboard; fus mate berry sossy; fling him arter—but bof climb up gen by rope hanging ober de starn—yah! yah! yah! Seccom mate fire pistol at Ajacks' head, but bullet flatten on him skull, and drop to de deck. Took seccom mate by de neck and frow him into long boat; hide under tarpaulin; neber see gen all day. Nex, carpenter, and steward; and sixteen ob crew; knock de bref out ob dere bodies and pitch down forehatchway. All fraid now, so took posseshum ob de ship; put de helm up; make for de Azore; know dat coas well; but nex day come in sight ob big Mericum liner; try to gib wide berth; no use; oberhaul dis nigger fas; see all in confushum on bor de ole 'Columby'; hear de skipper say to officer, 'Dars somefin wrong bout dat ship, take boat and board him.' Our cap'n hearing dat, jump up fo'castle an gib shout; fus mate do same; seccom mate stick him head out from under tarpaulin and make hullaballoo—so de enemy swarm up on deck. Flung lot ob dem ober side but get de wuss ob it now; tink noting ob one ship's crew, but can't stan agen two—yah! yah! yah!—soon pull him down like pack ob de wolf on de buffalo; put in iums; keep till go shore; bring for trial an clap in pris'm; hab carry shot; grind on mill; no jeckshun to make mat; won't let make mat, so 'scape ober wall, an streak for de open country; wander dar for tree week, wen wake one day after sleep under hedge, see two, tree men stan lookin at dis nigger. Dey hab carawam ob wile animal. One say 'Pass for de debbil; make bery good debbil; draw lot ob people; hab him for sartin.' And de bargum struck at omce. Ajacks de wonder ob de wurl; great trackshum; make heap ob money; till fall in lub wid white lady in show; pink eye like rabbit, hair like de dribm snow. Gree to lope; go off togedder fuss obbertunity—yah! yah! yah! Massa ob carawam oberhear dat, and when sleep nex time under hedge, leab dis chile; clear off de groun quick; get long start; nebbber see white lady more. Go bout country now; took for debbil gain; crowds of man an boy shout after Ajacks; near kill half-dozen; pollease set on track. but fraid take; bring more; fraid take; blige get military; redgment soger ('lisher, call em) surroun wid cannon; take him now after hard fight; gib lot trouble; get hold ob

bayonet and charge de ole party; lodge in county prism;—dat him story—yah! yah! yah!—be de deff ob some ob dem warders, fore long.”

“No, no, my worthy Ajacks; be quiet, and they will treat you better; promise me not to show further violence, and I will say a kind word for you. Your father was a preacher of the Gospel on the plantation, you said, and his son ought not to disgrace the family name. If you will agree to behave better, I will ask if you may be allowed to make mats—there!”

Mr. Lambert and the warders were very glad indeed for me to negotiate a compromise of this kind, by which means Ajacks was reduced to a tolerable state of docility, though he continued at times to utter complaints about the unhandsome treatment he met with, and grieve over the loss of “him lubly white lady wid de pink eye like de rabbit,” whom he had met in “de carawam.”

#### BRIDGET HAYES; HER TREACHERY, AND HER TEARS.

BRIDGET HAYES was a tall, dark, prepossessing-looking girl of about three-and-twenty, with handsome black eyes, and an address that would have well become one who was far her superior in social position. She had evidently received a very fair education, and neither dropped her h's nor was guilty of the slightest breach of grammar.

“I have something on my mind, and wish to tell you about it. I am very sorry for what I have done, and if I could I would undo it all. I was lady's maid to Miss Rose Bryson—her maid, not her ‘woman,’ as her aunt, Mrs. Batty, persisted in calling me, and I hated her heartily for it; I didn't see why I should be called anybody's ‘woman.’ Miss Rose was a very beautiful young lady, and engaged to Captain Musgrave, who sailed in the C—— for India about two years ago. Miss Rose loved Captain Musgrave, and I had often heard her say she would never marry anyone else; he was so noble, so generous and so brave, and had such a winning way with him. There was a Mr. Courtney, however, a country squire living near, who loved her too. He had a fine place, with horses and hounds, and was considered by her aunt a very good match for her niece, so she encouraged him all she could, and was very cold and distant to Captain Musgrave; though, being a friend of the family's, she couldn't well forbid him the house, or interfere in the matter too much—more particularly as Miss Rose was of age, and able to do what she pleased with herself and her money. I overheard all that took place between her and Captain Musgrave in the garden the night before he sailed. They were both nearly heart-broken, and promised to be faithful to one another, and write by every mail; and when the war was over, he was to return and make her his wife. And then they kissed one another, and he cut off a lock of her hair, and they went back hand-in-hand to the house.

“Mr. Courtney began to make his visits more frequent now, and

pay Miss Rose marked attention; but she always seemed sad, and would plead a bad headache and go to her room. This annoyed old Mrs. Batty, who would often come and knock at her door and beg her to return downstairs, or send her 'woman' up to say that he was there and must be entertained. So sometimes she was obliged to appear, though frequently she would not, and then Squire Courtney used to walk about the room like one distracted. At last, one day as he was riding off in a great passion, I happened to meet him in the long laurel drive. It was a lonely spot and there were no eavesdroppers but the blackbirds and squirrels.

"'Oh,' said he, reigning up his horse suddenly, and looking round to see that no one was near; 'humph—ah—you are Miss Bryson's maid' (I would have had nothing to do with him if he had called me her 'woman,') 'and a very nice good girl, and a pretty one too; here is half-a-sovereign for you, Bridget.'

"I had my private suspicions that something more was coming, but curtsied, thanked him, and was moving away.

"'Stay a minute,' said he; 'Bridget, would you do me a secret service? I have no friend here but the old lady, and she would be of no use to me at all in this matter.'

"'What service can I render you, sir?'

"'A very great one, and I will reward you well for it; but first, are you heart and soul with Captain Musgrave?'

"'He has always been very good and generous to me, sir.'

"'Ay, but he has only his captain's pay, Bridget; and I can afford to be *more* generous; look here, you see this purse; I will fill it with sovereigns. Say you will serve me, and it shall be yours. You shall have the best clothes of any girl in the county, and you shall wear rings and chains and brooches. I know that my huntsman, Tom Carew, too, is fond of you; well, don't blush, there is nothing to be ashamed of; I will give you both the prettiest little cottage on my estate—that one with the honeysuckle porch by the park gate, if you like. Am I understood?'

"I couldn't resist the bribe, and promised to do whatever he asked.

"'Good; when does your young lady expect to hear from Captain Musgrave?'

"'In about a week's time.'

"'The letters come to the Hall in a bag, I think, which is locked?'

"'Yes, Miss Rose entrusts me with the key, and I take them out in the morning.'

"'You could stop one coming from Captain Musgrave, and put another in its place?'

"'Yes.'

"'You could do the same with one leaving here for India?'

"'Yes.'



"'Good again; but not the first one that comes and goes, mark you; let those alone, for reasons that I have. We understand one another, do we? You promise to be true? very well; you shall be dressed like a duchess; you shall be the envy of all the girls in the village—ay, and of their mistresses too. Now pass on, for fear any one should see us talking together. Stay, by-the-bye, I was nearly forgetting. Can you procure me something in your lady's hand-writing—a note—a scrap—anything will do, so that it bears her signature?'

"'I can do that for you.'

"'And the same of Captain Musgrave?'

"I nodded.

"'Enough; give them under enclosure to Tom Carew within the next two days.'

"I don't know all that Mr. Courtney did, but I believe, in order to make it appear that the forged letters really came from India, he managed to get them posted there.

"Months now passed away, and Miss Rose's cheek began to grow pale. She had no appetite, refused all invitations out, couldn't bear to sit with Mrs. Batty, and took to wandering about in the woods alone. I guessed what was the matter, but said nothing. Mr. Courtney was often at the Hall, and now and then gave me a nod, or a pinch of the ear, to show, I suppose, that things were going right; for Mrs. Batty was always asking him to dinner, or to tea, and did all she could to further his suit. I heard her one day saying to her niece, 'Why do you grieve about that man? you see, plainly enough, that he is unworthy of you; he has evidently cooled down and means to marry some rich Nabob's daughter out in India. Mr. Courtney will make you a better husband a thousand times over; and he is as wealthy as one of the Rothschilds. Accept him at once, little goose! or regret it all your life. I would not be jilted by the best man breathing—no, though he were a prince of the blood-royal; think better of it.'

"About this time, Mrs. Batty, thinking it would cheer her niece up a little, took her to Paris, and Mr. Courtney followed, as a matter of course. I learned from my lover, Tom Carew, who had it from the Squire's valet, that his master had lost heavy sums at play, and thirty thousand pounds' worth of trees in the plantations were to be cut down to pay his gambling debts. The steward, Mr. Graves, was nearly wild about it, but he was obliged to obey orders. Things went on in this way for nearly twelve months (Mrs. Batty had of course returned to England again now), Mr. Courtney pressing Miss Rose to accept him; the aunt urging it with all her might; and my mistress each day growing paler and paler, and thinner and thinner, till at last she got downright ill and was obliged to keep her room. In the meantime Mr. Courtney had gone on gambling in his old way, and it was said the estate was now mortgaged so deeply that

unless the Squire married a rich wife it could never again be got out of the lawyer's hands. While things were in this state, we were all frightened one morning by hearing that Mr. Courtney had been found dead in his bed, with a phial of prussic acid lying on the table near Mrs. Batty was dreadfully shocked, and I heard her say to Miss Rose (who perhaps didn't cry enough about it, only looked still whiter in the face), 'I do believe you have no feeling; get away to your room.' Now comes the saddest part of all. I wished my young lady to marry the poor Captain, for I liked him better than I ever did Mr. Courtney (who had not kept any of his promises to me, and, I could not help thinking, had privately wanted to get me out of the way for some time); and considering it the best policy after what had occurred, I told her how she had been deceived; crying a good deal about it; falling down on my knees before her; and imploring her forgiveness. She looked at me for a moment, and then fainted right away. I feared she would never come to life again, but in about half-an-hour she revived, and as soon as she was a little composed, she called for her desk and began to write to Captain Musgrave, to explain all the trick; but that letter never reached him. Heart-broken at what he believed to be Miss Rose's treachery and falsehood, he determined to throw his life away in battle; and after killing six men, it is said, with his own hand, he was nearly cut to pieces by the Afghans—or the Sikhs—or the Sepoys—I can't remember which now. My mistress never smiled again after she heard this, but pined gradually away; refused to partake of any food or listen to any comforting words; and died within three months of the day on which the news of Captain Musgrave's death reached England."

I walked up and down the cell for several minutes after listening to this painful story, and turning abruptly to Bridget Hayes asked, "How came you here?—wicked and heartless as your conduct has been, it could scarcely bring you into this county prison."

There was a long pause.

"I preferred asking you, to inquiring of the governor, or looking in the gaol-books."

"I am implicated in a large jewel robbery. I was only the tool of others in this matter, but I played a principal part in the other, and have regretted it bitterly ever since."

FIVE-AND-TWENTY MINUTES IN THE GRAVE—BEING THE STORY OF  
THE SECOND BURIED TREASURE.

ABOUT a fortnight before leaving the gaol, Joel Crane had begged a few private words with me, and on my entering the cell, having first assured himself that there was no warder near, he said:

"There are two men named Barrs, and Revill, sir, who wish to make confession of robbery to you. They have heard that you managed to dig up that buried plate and restore it to the owner, and wish you to do a similar service for them."

"Well, but, Crane," said I, laughing in spite of myself, "I really can't go wandering about the country with pick-axe and shovel to unearth buried treasure in this way; I had quite enough of it before in your own case."

"I'm afraid they'll be very much disappointed if you don't, sir; they have quite set their hearts upon it."

"Upon my word it's rather perplexing; but what opportunities have you had of conversing together?"

"It is done when we are passing in and out of chapel, or to the mill and back; or when we are winding up water. We have means of communication only known to ourselves, like the ants, you know, sir, that tap one another on the head with their antennæ."

"Oh, indeed; well, I suppose I must go and hear what these men have to say."

Barrs rose with great alacrity from his stool and placed it for me. He was a stout, fair-complexioned young man, with a good-humoured countenance and a frank blue eye. I should have taken him for anything but a common thief. He had been reading one of the books I had lent him.

"You have something to tell me, Barrs, I hear."

He blushed, coughed, stammered, looked at the ground, shifted his position half-a-dozen times, and didn't appear to know how to begin. At last he got a fair start and said:

"I want you to be good enough to give back some property I stole, sir, nearly a couple of years ago."

"I can't promise, but will hear the particulars. Are you sorry for having committed the theft?"

"I am indeed, sir; and wish with all my heart to return it to the owner."

"Very well; you are not in for that offence, I presume, or I could not possibly interfere."

"Oh no, sir; this is a recent affair altogether. I merely got mixed up in a street row, but nearly killed a policeman while trying to rescue one of my messmates, who was a sailor on board the S——. That was quite a separate thing from the one I want to tell you of. No one can trace it home to me now, and this was the way in which it came about:—

"I was a day labourer on a farm where my father also worked. He was taken ill one day while driving his horses in the rain, and the doctor being called in, I was sent to bring back the medicine. I was not by any means a steady fellow, and having picked up a number of loose companions, who drank, and poached, and smuggled, and did all sorts of bad things, it was an easy matter for me to sink a step or two lower, and turn thief. One evening I had gone to the doctor's as usual, and as I passed into the surgery I saw his cash-box lying on a table in a little parlour where nobody happened to be at the moment. I waited till the servant who showed me in had

got back into her kitchen, watched my opportunity, seized the box, and took to my heels. I thought no more of my father or his physic, and scampered off across the country as fast as my legs could carry me. While resting by-and-by in a cowshed, I heard sounds in the distance that made me fancy there were people after me, so I stole off again, through a wood, and then a bright thought came into my head. I knew that it would be fatal to have the box found on me (I had tried once or twice to break it open, but couldn't, it was so strongly made), so determined so secrete it in a churchyard not far away. There was a grave there from which—so the story went—a dead man had risen, and laid a curse on anyone who should throw the earth in again—so be sure nobody ever did. I had seen it many times; the place was said to be haunted, and it was a fellow of no common courage who dared to venture near—particularly after dark. I had little fear of ghosts, however, and resolved to hide my booty in that grave. It had once been six feet deep, but the earth having fallen in, with leaves, sticks, stones, and other rubbish, it was not much more than five now. I easily let myself down, and began to scratch a hole with my two hands in the side near the bottom. I felt something tumble out, and knew by the feel that it was somebody's skull. I should have been scared a bit perhaps at another time, but my liberty, and the contents of the cash-box, were at stake; so I completed my task, put my treasure safely in, and made all snug with clay and stones."

"Yes; and——"

"I should be glad if you would find the box and restore it to the doctor, sir."

"Doubtless; and pray where is this grave?"

"In M—— churchyard, near C——."

"Why, man, that is down in Kent!"

"I think it is, sir."

"And do you suppose I can go all that distance on the bare prospect of finding what may have been picked out by some enterprising sexton, or common tramp, three weeks perhaps after you hid it?"

"I believe it to be there, sir, to this hour; no one acquainted with the place would dare to go down into that grave, and no mere wanderer would know of it; besides, who could guess there was anything valuable there?"

"The hole may have been filled up; ground may have grown scarce in the churchyard."

"No one would fill up that grave, sir; you will find what I say to be true."

I returned home after my conversation with the prisoner in a very undecided state of mind. I would go, and I would not go; it was my duty, and it was not my duty. I wished to oblige the man, I wished to restore the doctor's cash-box, but there was a long journey

in front of it all; there was a strong possibility of failure; there was—"No, plague take it!" cried I, "there is my own old love of adventure—of doing something that nobody else would do. I will go; but first—yes, I ought to have thought of that before—I must see Barrs again."

"Why have you never been to recover the box yourself?" I asked him; "you tell me the robbery was committed upwards of two years ago."

"I have never had the chance, sir, fearing capture. I made my way to P——, hid myself in the hold of a merchant vessel just as she was about to sail, and was not discovered till we had got fairly out to sea. The captain then gave me two dozen for my pains, and made me work like a negro till we dropped anchor at Melbourne. I was in the bush for a long time, earning a livelihood how I could—not very honestly at times, I fear—then worked my passage home, and before I was a week ashore got into trouble again. I shall not be long here, and intend to restore the doctor's property myself by-and-by—at least I think so—if you don't. I wish to be honest in future."

I reached M—— early one summer evening, and after going first to the little churchyard to reconnoitre, sat for an hour in the small parlour of the village inn. There were several half-drunken men in the tap-room, talking noisily, and now and then nearly ending in a fight; but the quarrel generally spent itself in angry words and not very agreeable imprecations, accompanied by the loud tramping of heavy feet on the floor, and clatter of pewter pots on the table. One of the revellers was taunting another with being afraid to go into the churchyard and bring a clod of earth from the open grave near the yew tree, and I began to fear that I should have a companion in my ghostly explorations; but nothing came of the challenge (just then), and when the night was favourable I walked forth alone. I had taken care to provide myself with a dark lantern, well trimmed, as well as a very large clasp-knife, capable of pickaxe duty, and stealing quietly among the graves I came to the one I wanted, which was open, and let myself down, having carefully provided for an ascent at will. I soon formed the necessary excavation, but found nothing to interest me, except perhaps parts of a skull and a tibia or two. I worked on, and on, and on, with no better success. Then the prospect of a failure occurred to me, and I gave Barrs a blessing.

"The fellow has deceived me," murmured I. "Stop, perhaps instead of facing the tree and calling this the right side of the grave, he had his back to the tree, which would make it the left." And altering my tactics, I began to scrape away again lustily. "Ha!—by the bones of all the good men around—here it is at last!"

Just at this moment I heard voices. Two figures were approaching, but with some hesitation evidently; they were no doubt a couple of the roysterers from the little inn tap-room, and must be got rid of without delay. Accordingly, I put up my head suddenly, and

allowed a sickly gleam to escape from the lantern. There was a loud yell of alarm, one of them took to his heels, the other tumbled over a neighbouring tombstone, and called to his companion to stop, for the love of heaven. In another minute I was on my way back to the inn, with the cash-box under my arm!

There was a great deal of coarse merriment and laughter going on here; but I did not wait to learn the cause of it. I went upstairs to wash my face and hands and brush my coat, placed my prize in a sheet of paper that I had got from the landlord, inquired where Doctor Gale lived, and marched off at once to his house to pay my respects. I told the maid at the door to say that a gentleman wished to see him. "Would I be so obliging as to send in my card?" I was about to take my case from my pocket, but on a moment's consideration forbore. This rendered me a little unpopular. "The doctor had been out all day among his patients; did I wish to consult him professionally?"—"Well, no, I did not." "Would I explain my business?"—"No, I would rather not, to any one but himself." Then I heard a voice say: "It's another of those genteel beggars, I warrant. Tell him that I can't be seen—stay, show him into the surgery; he won't carry off any of my gallipots, I'll be bound."

"Your gallipots are quite safe, sir," I said, advancing boldly; "and so, if you will allow me to make the remark, is your—cash-box. Perhaps you will favour me with a brief interview."

He came forward now, lamp in hand, and looked at me steadily, then made a low bow.

"I beg your pardon—a clergyman, I perceive." And he took me into the small parlour from which his treasure had been carried off two years before, and, placing a chair, said:

"Mr. —, Mr. —, I did not quite catch your name."

"Meadows."

"Meadows, oh!" And he glanced again at my clerical tie to assure himself of my respectability.

"You lost a cash-box from this very table some two years ago, I think?"

"Bless me, yes!" he cried, seizing both arms of his chair. "Can you give me any tidings of it?"

"No."

His countenance fell.

"It would be better to give you the box itself." And I pointed to the paper parcel.

"What, my cash-box!" He sprang to his feet.

"There it is; and the lock still unbroken."

He flung himself upon it, tore away the wrapper with trembling hands, held it at arm's length, appeared half choked, and walked up and down the room six times with the box under his arm; then sat down, wiped his forehead, and said:



"You have rendered me an incalculable service; it has changed the whole colour of my life."

"I am glad of it. You forgive the thief, I hope?"

"From the very bottom of my heart—that is, providing the contents are all safe."

"They must be safe; no one has ever opened it."

"I can scarcely believe my senses. Here, Caroline"—to his wife, who entered with marvellous despatch, for there had only been the door between—"here is our cash-box, restored to us by this gentleman! Mr. Meadows, my wife—my wife, Mr. Meadows."

I rose and bowed; the lady silently offered me her hand: she was in tears, and could not speak. The doctor ran out of the room for a bunch of keys, returned, and the cash-box, after a few pulls and thumps, flew open.

"All my coupons safe!" he cried in rapture: "seven hundred pounds, sir, in the A—— and S—— Railway; my uncle's will; my bank-notes—eleven of them; my cheque-book; my deeds and documents—safe! safe! safe! It is like a dream. Come into the other room with me: you will not go back to the inn; we can find you a bed. We must have the whole story from beginning to end: I am dying to hear it." And cramming the papers back in a heap, he dragged me away, box and all.

I have little more to relate. I stayed the whole of the next day with Doctor Gale, and was introduced to several of his neighbours, by whom I was viewed as almost a greater hero than when I dug up the silver flagons at ——. I must not forget to add, too, that the doctor presented me with a five-pound note for Barrs, and another to the same amount to give away in small sums to any of his brother-prisoners, deserving or undeserving, on their leaving the gaol.



## FILLING IN THE BLANK.

WHEN I came back from my last visit to Russia, with the materials of a novel which has yet to be written, one of the first people I met as I was going down Pall Mall was Gabriel Wyth, and I asked him, quite honestly, whether his picture of Joan of Arc had been the sensation of the Academy. When I parted from him, the day I left England, we had been staying in a pretty little place in Surrey together, he sketching and I writing a village idyll and trying to feel like a farmer. He had been full of the picture he intended to paint then, and the sight of his welcome face brought back the remembrance of it. We were passing my club at the moment, and he went in with me for a chat, and was sitting opposite to me when I asked the question. He stared across at me strangely.

"My picture of Joan of Arc? Who on earth told you that I was going to paint it?" he asked in surprise.

"You, of course," I said; "you talked enough about it at Windlehurst."

"Oh! I remember. They told me that you were with me at Windlehurst," he replied in a matter-of-fact voice. "I have been anxious to see you to ask you what I did there?"

It was my turn to stare this time. If any man had reason to remember our visit to the little Surrey village it was Gabriel Wyth himself, and his remark made me wonder whether he had gone mad in my absence. He noticed the wondering look on my face, and hastened to explain.

"Have you not heard of my accident and illness?" he asked, and I assured him that I had heard absolutely nothing while I had been away.

"Not even of the accident to the Imperial train?" he asked, and I shook my head.

"What was that?"

"On the last day of August last year, the Imperial to Dover was smashed up, three killed, seven injured. I was one of the seven, though what I was doing in the train and where I intended to go, only Heaven and, perhaps, yourself know. I got a splinter of the woodwork in my brain. You can see the scar when I brush back my hair. Well, they thought that I was dead, and despaired of my life in fact for a month or two. When at last I turned the corner, a curious thing had happened. At first they thought I should lose my memory altogether, and be an idiot, but gradually it all came back to me up to within a few months of my accident. Those few months still remain a blank to me, except where they have been filled in for

me by my friends. I am told that I spent a month with you in Surrey, and I have the sketches which I painted there, but I have not the slightest remembrance of it myself. And so far nobody can tell me what on earth I was going down to Dover for. I thought at first that I might have been going abroad with you, and I actually went through the list of killed to see if you were among them."

"The last day of August," I said, excitedly. "Then it was the very day after we parted. Your wife must have been with you. Was she hurt at all?"

My friend laughed.

"Joking apart, old fellow," he said, "I wish that you could tell me where I was going in that train?"

I had never felt more serious.

"I am really anxious to hear about Mrs. Wyth," I said. "You were starting on your honeymoon to Normandy, so she must have been in the accident. Great heavens, you do not mean to say that you have forgotten you were married?"

Gabriel stared critically at my excited face with a half smile on his own.

"Really," he said, reproachfully, "if you knew how awkward this gap in my memory makes me feel, you would not seize my misfortune as an opportunity for making a joke."

"You will drive me mad if you talk about jokes," I said excitedly. "On my honour, I am terribly in earnest. Do you mean to tell me that you have lost all remembrance of Agatha Lynn?"

He stared at me with a strange expression, in which fear struggled evidently with incredulity and a readiness to laugh if I turned out to be amusing myself at his expense. I was beginning to wonder whether Wyth was amusing himself at mine, but even in jest I did not think that he would deny his love and devotion to the beautiful girl whom he had loved so passionately at Windlehurst.

"I tell you that I have forgotten everything," he said. "If you are in earnest tell me what you mean by speaking about a wife and a honeymoon. I cannot be married or they would have told me so."

I could not help being convinced that he had really forgotten the fact, and began hurriedly to tell him the whole story of his love, still unable to believe that he had entirely forgotten it.

"We went to Windlehurst together at the end of July," I said, "and on the day after our arrival we met Agatha Lynn, the only daughter of the squire of the village. It seems absurd to have to tell you that she was the most beautiful woman we had either of us ever seen. We were climbing over an old ruin in the strictly-guarded grounds of her father, where we had no right to be. The squire was a village despot, and refused us permission to see the place. As it seemed rather interesting we went without——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Gabriel impatiently, "but you said I was married. That was a jest, wasn't it?"

"For Heaven's sake cease this talk of jesting. Is it possible that you do not remember that you married Agatha Lynn?"

My excited manner overcame his incredulity at last, and his face startled me when I glanced at it again. It had grown ghastly in its paleness.

"But speak, man. This woman is dead, is she not? I am not married to her still?" he asked eagerly. To think of sweet Agatha Lynn's husband speaking as if he wished to hear of her death!

"She was alive when I left England," I said. "Let me tell you all about her, and then surely you must remember something. It is incredible to think that any accident could have wiped the remembrance of her entirely out of your mind. Agatha Lynn; does the name recall nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing," he answered, staring at me still with his white frightened face. "Every impression in my brain that had not become fixed with time was wiped out clean by my injury. But on my word of honour, it never remotely occurred to me that I had done anything in the forgotten period that could affect my fate in any way. I have never troubled to inquire what I did at Windlehurst."

"And you have not heard from your wife since your recovery?" I asked.

"Not a word."

"Then I am afraid that she must have been killed in the railway accident," I said, with concern, for I had admired and cared for sweet, beautiful Agatha Lynn almost as much as Wyth, although she had no care or love from the very first for anybody but Gabriel. It shocked me inexpressibly when he answered with relief in his tone:

"Heaven grant it!"

"Hush, hush," I said, horrified at his words. "You must remember soon how passionately you loved her. Why did not Heaven ordain her to love me instead of you if you can have forgotten her so soon? If she was not killed, what may not have become of her. Let me tell you all I know, though if she be really dead, it would be merciful to let you forget. We were climbing up the walls of the old ruined castle, and you slipped and fell. You had been rendered unconscious for a few moments by the fall, and found Agatha kneeling beside you, bathing your forehead, which you had struck in falling, with water that I had fetched for her from the little stream close by. Can you forget her face with its dreamy innocence, its wonderful tenderness, the heroic unselfishness, and powers of self-sacrifice that showed themselves in her wonderful eyes, and made you think instantly of painting her as Joan of Arc listening to the voices in the Domremy Woods? Is it possible that you forget the love that sprang into both your hearts at that first meeting? how you went every day, nominally to sketch the ruin, but really to see her? how

she told you when you spoke of love that she was to be married to her cousin, whom she feared and disliked, by that despotic old tyrant of a father, who turned you out of his house when you went boldly to demand her hand? and how you married her secretly three days after with nobody the wiser but myself?"

"I remember nothing," said Gabriel, with a face full of despairing anguish. "Go on. We were really married?"

"Yes; and were to go for a month or two to Normandy, and break the news to her father and your people from there. We three travelled down to town together. You were to stay the night there, so that Agatha should not be overtired with travelling, and I, feeling *de trop*, for I never saw two people so much in love with each other as you and the wife you have forgotten, I went on direct to Dover and so on to St. Petersburg. I suppose that you had resumed your journey when the accident happened, and either Agatha was killed in the collision, or she has returned to her despotic old father, who may have bullied her into her grave for all I know. And you tell me that you could have forgotten a love such as you professed for the priceless woman who gave you her heart. I cannot believe it."

Gabriel Wyth looked at me solemnly across the table.

"I give you my word of honour," he said impressively, "that nothing you have told me awakens the least remembrance in my mind. Of any love I may have had for this girl whom you say I have married I recall nothing. What I do know—and it makes your record very terrible to me—is that I love somebody else a hundred times more passionately and completely than I could ever have loved this Agatha Lynn."

"And you have told her so?"

Wyth groaned. "I was going to tell her so to-day. I came to town chiefly to buy her a ring."

"It is fortunate that you have not spoken," I said. "You cannot do so now, until you have discovered what became of your wife."

"I am afraid that my speaking is unnecessary," he said. "I am sure that Mary loves me, and it will break her heart if this woman comes and separates us, as it will break mine."

"Don't, don't," I pleaded. "If you only knew how worthy Agatha was of your love. I am sure that you have only to see her if she is still alive to feel all your old passion return."

"It is impossible," he said, with determination. "I could never love any woman but Mary Denzil if I lived to be a hundred."

"It quite disproves your old theory, then," I returned, remembering an argument that we had had at Windlehurst, "about man being able to love only once in his life."

"I do not think that I could really have loved the other," said Gabriel; and I could not help smiling when I remembered his worship of the sweet girl he had made his wife.

"It is of no use arguing," I cried. "We must act at once. The

first thing is to ascertain whether Agatha is alive. I can almost hope with you that she is not, for I am sure that she could never forget her love for you. I suppose she must be, or you would surely have heard from her in some way."

"It is strange that nobody has reminded me of her existence," said Gabriel, as if he had still a little lingering doubt in his mind whether I had not imagined all I had told him.

"Nobody in your circle knew of her existence," I replied, "and at Windlehurst I suppose I was the only friend who knew anything of your courtship or marriage. Owing to the Squire's idiocy it was clandestine from the very beginning. Of course it was wrong to marry in this way, but the Squire's frightful temper and brutal tyranny excused it. We were trespassing when we first met her, and your only visit to the Hall was when the old man ordered you out. I do not expect that he remembered your name even. If he guessed when his daughter disappeared that she had married you, he would find a difficulty in ascertaining the fact except from his daughter. I do not see who could tell you except your wife and myself. Let me ring for a back file of the *Times*, and read the account of the railway accident. We may see her name among the killed."

"I am afraid not," said Gabriel, and his words struck a cold chill through me. It would certainly be merciful if poor Agatha had ceased to exist, since the man who ought to love and care for her could only look upon her as a bar to his happiness with another.

The paper account, which we soon found, did not give the name of Miss Lynn or Mrs. Wyth among the killed or wounded, but it mentioned that one young lady, whose injuries necessitated her removal to the hospital, had not been identified.

"Depend upon it, that is your wife," I said. "None of her friends would suspect that she was in the train. We must continue our investigations at the hospital."

"Perhaps we shall discover more from a subsequent paper," said Gabriel, turning over the leaves, but our joint efforts led to no result, and we left the club and went straight to the hospital to which the injured lady had been taken. There our doubts were soon set at rest by the house surgeon. The lady had remained for two months in their care, and had been able when she recovered to give her name as Miss Agatha Lynn of Windlehurst Hall.

"Then she recovered?" asked Wyth, with a groan that made our informant stare at him.

"Yes, a perfect recovery," said the doctor; "and she did not carry away a single scar, although we were very much afraid at first that she would be disfigured. I remember the case because the lady was so unusually beautiful."

"And did she return to Windlehurst Hall?" I asked.

"Yes. I wrote to her friends. Her father had just died suddenly in an apoplectic fit, and the family lawyer came down to accompany



her home in place of a relative. She has since made a very handsome donation to the funds of the hospital."

"Which shows that she has come into the whole property," said Gabriel, and I wondered what thought was passing in his mind.

I found out as soon as we had left the hospital.

"She gave her name as Miss Lynn," said Wyth excitedly to me. "You must have made a mistake about the marriage or she would have called herself Mrs. Wyth."

"I should think that she waited for your recovery before announcing to anybody the fact of her marriage," I said. "It is perfectly certain that you were married, for I gave her away, and what would she have been doing in the club train with you, if you were not? I have no doubt that the poor girl is breaking her heart over your silence. We must run down at once to Windlehurst. I am certain that you will fall in love afresh the instant that you see her."

To my surprise Gabriel shook his head.

"I am perfectly certain that it is impossible for me to care for any woman but Mary Denzil. Perfectly certain. If, as you assure me, this other person whom you call my wife is as fond of me as you imagine, I dare not face an interview with her. She has evidently satisfied herself that I have forgotten her, and her gift to the hospital shows that her father's death has left her rich. I should do nothing but harm by appearing in her life again, and it is impossible for me to think of living with her, a stranger as she must seem to me, as her husband."

For my part I was perfectly certain that he could not help falling in love with her if he saw her, even if it recalled nothing of the old love which seemed to have been extracted from his nature by a surgical operation, and I reiterated my opinion and my demand that he should accompany me to Windlehurst, until Wyth lost patience with me.

"I will tell you honestly that I do not want to love my wife," he said at last; "even if it were possible, and I am perfectly certain that it is not. You tell me that I have been disloyal to her, but I cannot realise it, or feel it. It would be different if I were disloyal to Miss Denzil in my thoughts. I can bear anything but that."

"But you cannot marry her," I said, and my friend nodded.

"I know," he said, and the cold despair in his voice told me suddenly how tragic his position was. I had been thinking only of sweet Agatha Wyth, and felt only hostility for this other woman who had taken the love which should be hers; but now I realised suddenly how terrible my revelation must have been to Wyth if he loved her as he had loved his wife.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I shall go abroad, I think. I cannot live near Mary Denzil, and not tell her that I love her."

"And you will leave your wife in complete ignorance of your fate and feeling towards her?"

"Nothing that I can tell her can give her any satisfaction."

"But it would be better for her to know," I said, full of pity for the poor girl waiting and wondering why her husband did not come to claim her. "If you do not see her, I think I ought to do so."

"It is immaterial to me. Whatever happens I shall not see her. I shall start for Rome to-morrow. There is a chance of my catching malaria at this time of the year. That would be the best thing that I could do."

"Do not be a fool, Wyth," I said; "you have your art to live for, even if you cannot love your wife, and I am sure that you would if you saw her."

"And forget the woman I love? Never; it is useless talking about it."

"Then let us talk about your art," I said. "I suppose that your illness prevented you sending a picture to the Academy this year as you dreamed of doing at Windlehurst. Why not give all your thoughts to it now. Joan of Arc listening to the voices, with the forest foliage for a background and the swine at her feet would make a fine subject, although you would have to get another model for Joan. You were full of it when I saw you last, and I came back expecting to find that it had been the sensation of the year."

A puzzled look had come into his face.

"It is strange," he said. "I thought of painting that very picture a month ago. I could swear that the idea occurred to me then for the first time because I know what suggested it."

"I expect that most of your lost thoughts will repeat themselves."

"As my falling in love appears to have done," he said thoughtfully.

"I wonder whether I really cared for my wife as I care for Mary?"

It seemed to me that it was the first serious thought he had given to Agatha, and I pressed him again to see her, but he would not hear of it. He thanked me however for suggesting that I should put an end to any suspense she might be feeling about him, and when we parted, I set out at once on my journey to Windlehurst, my heart full of pity for the poor girl I was expecting to see there, and of distaste for the terrible revelation that I had to make to her of the complete loss of her husband's love. Wyth was returning home to pack up for his intended journey to Rome.

"You will not see Miss Denzil," I said as I left him, and Wyth hesitated.

"For pity's sake," I cried, "don't do more harm than you can help. Is it not enough to have broken one woman's heart?"

"I have broken two," he said, with cold despair, "for I am sure that Mary loves me. I shall do no harm by telling her why I must never see her again."

I could not agree with him. According to the conventions of fiction at any rate, a good woman can never give all her love until she is assured that it is returned, and I thought that it would be much wiser if Gabriel did not see Miss Denzil again. I offered

therefore to see her as well as Mrs. Wyth and explain the reason of the artist's departure to her, and I made my friend rather reluctantly promise that he would not see Mary Denzil, at any rate until I had returned with news of his wife. I was anxious, therefore, to get my mission at Windlehurst accomplished as soon as possible in order to return to him. He was living with his people at Richmond.

At Windlehurst, however, a disappointment awaited me. Mrs. Wyth, or Miss Lynn as I called her when I made my inquiries at the Hall, had left the place for a long visit, and strangely enough had left behind her no address by which she could be found. It appeared to be unnecessary, for although she had been away more than a month, no letters had come for her in her absence, and I was the first person who had inquired about her. Her plan of action in holding no communication with a place after she had left it agreed so completely with my own that I could not blame her for it, although in this instance I found it very annoying. I stopped to chat with the old housekeeper who had answered my inquiries, about the death of the Squire and her young mistress's injury in the railway accident. I found by adroit questioning that the Squire's apoplectic fit which ended his life was supposed to have been due to his anger when he discovered that his daughter had left Windlehurst the day before the accident.

"The old master was trying to force Miss Agatha into a marriage with her cousin, whom she hated," she explained, when I had fully started her garrulity by my show of sympathy, "and she ran away to save herself from it. She was very ill in London, and the lawyers could not find out for a long while where she was. You see the Squire died before he had time to alter his will, and Miss Agatha came into everything. The estate is not entailed. She soon sent her cousin about his business, but she has not seemed to me so happy since she has been her own mistress. I suppose that it is the effect of her illness."

"I suppose so," I agreed mendaciously; and as the old lady assured me that even Miss Lynn's lawyer was ignorant of her address, I thought that I might as well get back and tell Gabriel Wyth what little I had ascertained before night.

I found that he had packed up ready for his journey, and was burning with eagerness to see the girl he loved before he went. Only his promise to me had withheld him from going to bid her a long "good-bye," while I was away, and he insisted upon my releasing him from his promise now that we were together again. It took all the reasoning of which I am capable to make him see that his visit would be a cruelty to her and only a torture to himself.

"Better write to her and explain what you have discovered," I said, "without saying a word about your love for her. If, as you think, she cares for you she will understand. If she has not thought of you as a lover, it will be much better than a romantic farewell, which

might just do the injury and turn friendship into the love from which you ought to wish to save her."

"But she expects me this evening," groaned Gabriel, who was sensible and unselfish enough to be influenced by my fears.

"Then let me go and explain to her. Anything is better than your seeing her. You cannot help being pathetic, and that alone would make a woman fall in love with you if she had not thought of it before."

"But I am sure that she loves me as much as I love her," pleaded the poor fellow, and by way of cooling him down I asked him to tell me all about Mary Denzil.

He seemed only too willing to talk about her. They had become acquainted through Miss Denzil fainting in the street, as Wyth was passing. He put her into a cab and took her to the house where she was staying on a visit to her aunt Lady Delmaine at Richmond. Next day he called to inquire after her health, and so an acquaintance commenced which appeared to have ripened into love very quickly.

"I really must go and bid her 'good-bye,'" he said again. "I cannot leave her without seeing her once more," and I had to go through all my arguments and appeals again.

Finally we agreed upon a compromise. I was to go over to Lady Delmaine's, see Miss Denzil, and explain that Gabriel could not keep his appointment on account of the shock of hearing that he was a married man, and that he would leave Richmond on the morrow on account of the discovery, and Gabriel would decide from the manner in which Mary Denzil took the news whether to have a last interview with her in the morning or not.

As will have been surmised, I pride myself upon the delicacy with which I can perform an awkward mission such as I was meditating; and, to tell the truth, I was very anxious to see this girl who had won my friend's love. Was it possible that she could be as beautiful as Agatha Lynn, I was asking myself, as I made my way to Lady Delmaine's. I had decided to lay the full facts of the case before Lady Delmaine first, but as it happened she was not at home, and I sent in my card to Miss Denzil, with the intimation scribbled on the back of it that I came with a message from Gabriel Wyth. I was shown into the drawing-room to wait for her, and passed my time still conjecturing whether I should find Wyth's second choice as good a one as his first. It is impossible, I said to myself, and, as the door opened, and Mary Denzil entered, I found that I was wrong.

It was Agatha herself! Although she must have been surprised to see me, she greeted me hurriedly, her face full of anxiety.

"You have not brought me bad news of Gabriel?" she asked quickly.

"That depends," I said, "whether I am right in thinking Mrs. Wyth and Miss Mary Denzil are one and the same person."

"You are quite right," she said; "but I do hope that you have not told Gabriel."

"I never guessed it till this moment."

"Then you must keep my secret for me a little longer."

"If I do," I said, "your husband starts to-morrow for Rome with the firm intention of catching the malaria and dying there."

Her unspeakably beautiful face filled with concern. "Why?"

"Because he intended to tell Miss Denzil this evening that he loved her and ask her to be his wife, and I just met him in time to inform him that he is a married man and cannot do so."

"You are sure that he was going to ask me to marry him—that he loves me?"

"You would not doubt it for a moment if you had heard the poor fellow talking all day."

"Then my secret does not matter any longer; but I wish that you had let him come here to propose. I should enjoy a second proposal. I should not be so nervous this time."

"Then I will send him," I said. "Goodness knows that I have had trouble enough to keep him away. But does it not occur to you that I am feeling rather puzzled?"

She laughed her old sweet musical laugh that had run in my ears every day since I left her on her wedding-day with Gabriel.

"Of course, you wish to know why I am masquerading here under another name," she said brightly. "You heard about the accident and my illness, of course. When I recovered and heard that Gabriel was alive, I could not think why Gabriel did not come to me; and then from my aunt, Lady Delmaine, I heard of his loss of memory, and I was shocked to find that he must have forgotten all about me. I met him in the street first to see whether he would not recognise me, and when he looked at me as if I were a stranger I fainted. He brought me home, and I dare not tell him that I was his wife. I could not bear to think of his trying to love me as a duty, so I took the liberty of changing my name and determined to make him fall in love with me afresh. You are quite sure that Gabriel meant to ask me to marry him?"

"Quite sure, I will send him to do so. I will not tell him anything."

"That will be delicious," she said. "Do you know, I have been so frightened lest he should find out too soon. He made a sketch of me at Windlehurst. I wonder that he has not come across it and guessed everything."

"I wonder," I said; but it was an untruth. The sketch, which I stole from Wyth on the day before his wedding at Windlehurst, is locked away in one of my boxes now, and I often take it out and sigh over it. But I suppose that Wyth's theory is right, and that he and the woman with whom he fell in love twice were meant for each other, and the woman who was meant for me died young.

HERBERT FLOWERDEW.

LITANY.

ALL-SEEING God, eternal Father,  
Thou to whom the race is dear,  
All our cries for light and guidance  
Hear, O hear!

In Thy love supreme, transcendent,  
As the ocean wide and deep,  
Us, Thy weak and wandering children,  
Keep, O keep!

When our spent and sinking courage  
Dares not breast the stormy wave,  
When we falter in the conflict,  
Save, O save!

When the night is gathering round us,  
And life's lights their radiance hide,  
LIGHT OF LIGHT, our faltering footsteps  
Guide, O guide!

When in deep heartrending anguish,  
Broken cries our only prayer,  
Then, O God, in mercy keep us  
From despair!

God of all the myriad ages,  
God of all the future years,  
Save Thine earth from desolation,  
Pain and tears!

Give us calm and full assurance  
That Thy wisdom knoweth best;  
Guide us through life's stern experience  
Into rest!

ELIZABETH GIBSON.





